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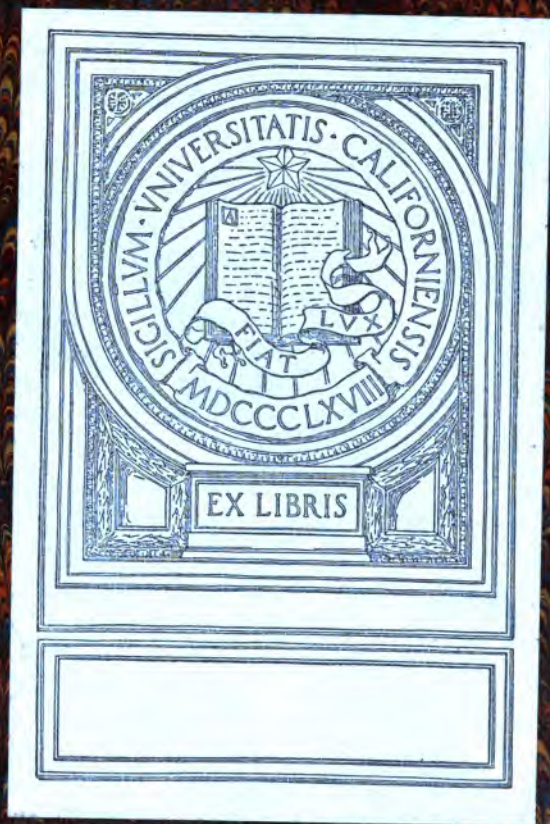
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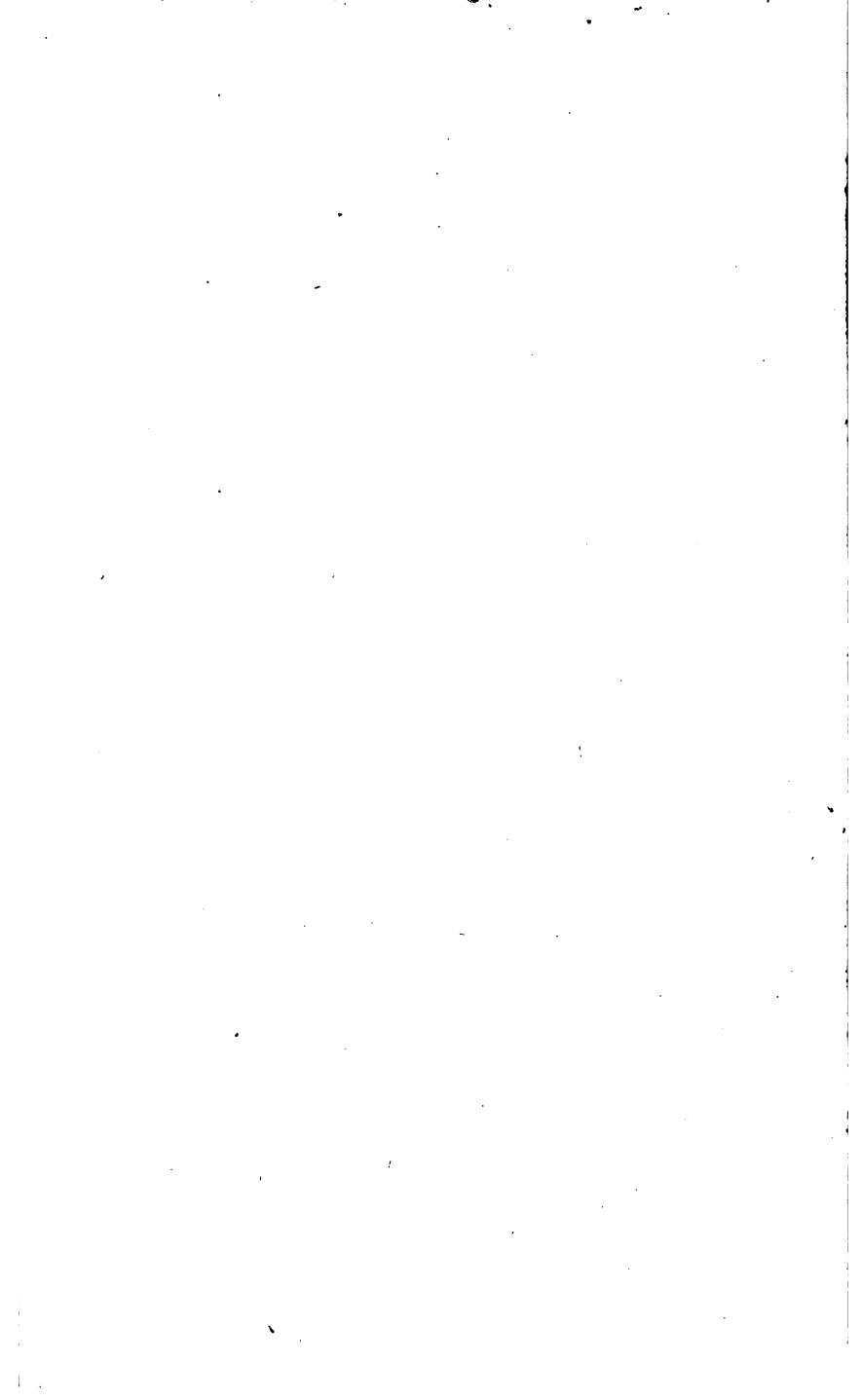
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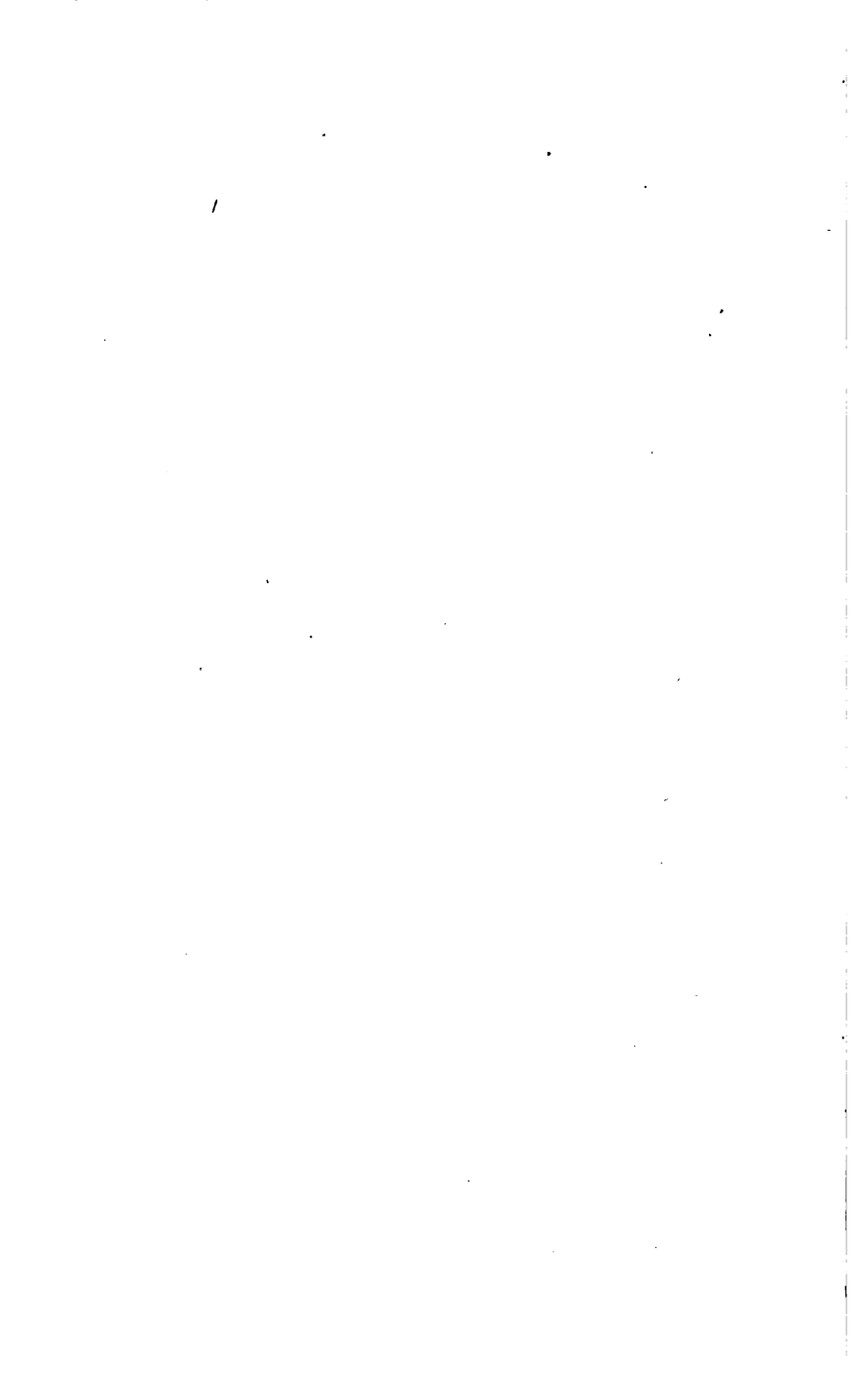






Presentation

1/12



*Mr. and Mrs. Thompson
With Mrs. Roby's kindest
remembrance.*

THE
LEGENDARY AND POETICAL
REMAINS
OF
JOHN ROBY.

LONDON :
SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW,
New-street-Square.





August 1848

JOHN WEBB.

THE
LEGENDARY AND POETICAL
REMAINS

OF

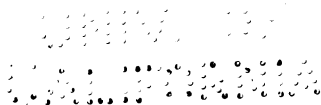
J O H N R O B Y,

AUTHOR OF "TRADITIONS OF LANCASHIRE."

WITH

A SKETCH OF HIS LITERARY LIFE AND
CHARACTER.

BY HIS WIDOW.



LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.
1854.

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PREFACE.

THE poetry and tales constituting the main part of the present volume, need no apology or introduction. Most of them were finished for publication by the author.*

But in reference to the biographical sketch which precedes them, a few words will not be out of place.

A life so private afforded but few materials. Incidents of early days, tending to illustrate the bent and development of his powers, are derived from memoranda in Mr. Roby's own handwriting, or from well-remembered conversations. The absence of that unconscious self-portraiture, which a man's own letters present, will be found supplied, to some extent, by short reminiscences, kindly furnished by friends. The memoir is not offered as a complete biography. It is simply an outline of a literary life, and of a character; the one as varied in its aspect, as the other was uniform in its tenor. That part of the life which fell under the writer's own observation, has of necessity been dwelt

* The recovery of Mr. Roby's papers from the wreck of the Orion, June, 1850, when God, in His inscrutable providence, cut short a life so incomparably precious, was even then matter of thankfulness. Many portions of the MS., from which the legends in this volume were printed, bear traces of the sad catastrophe.

on most at length, and she fears lest too much prominence may at times have been given to what is personal to herself, and the double life be thus too strongly shown. Yet the shadow that brings out the principal object will scarcely be censured. No one can feel so deeply as herself the inadequacy of her talents to the subject. To one qualification alone she may lay claim, without fear of the charge of presumption, "that of the seeing heart," without which it has been truly said, "*no true seeing for the head is so much as possible.*"

The writer will esteem herself happy if, with all the imperfections of detail, she shall, in a measure, have succeeded in her aim. That aim has been to gather up, with a loving reverence, the scattered products of her husband's pen, by which the reader may estimate his powers, and to present a faithful mental portrait of one, with whom the pursuit of literature was no bar to the discharge of ordinary duties, and whose gifts were the Lares and Penates of his own fireside,—one who, as time advanced, learned the secret of self-renunciation and spiritual obedience, and having "left this life for a better," still, lives "in memory here," as a man of genius and a Christian.

December, 1853.

E. R. R.

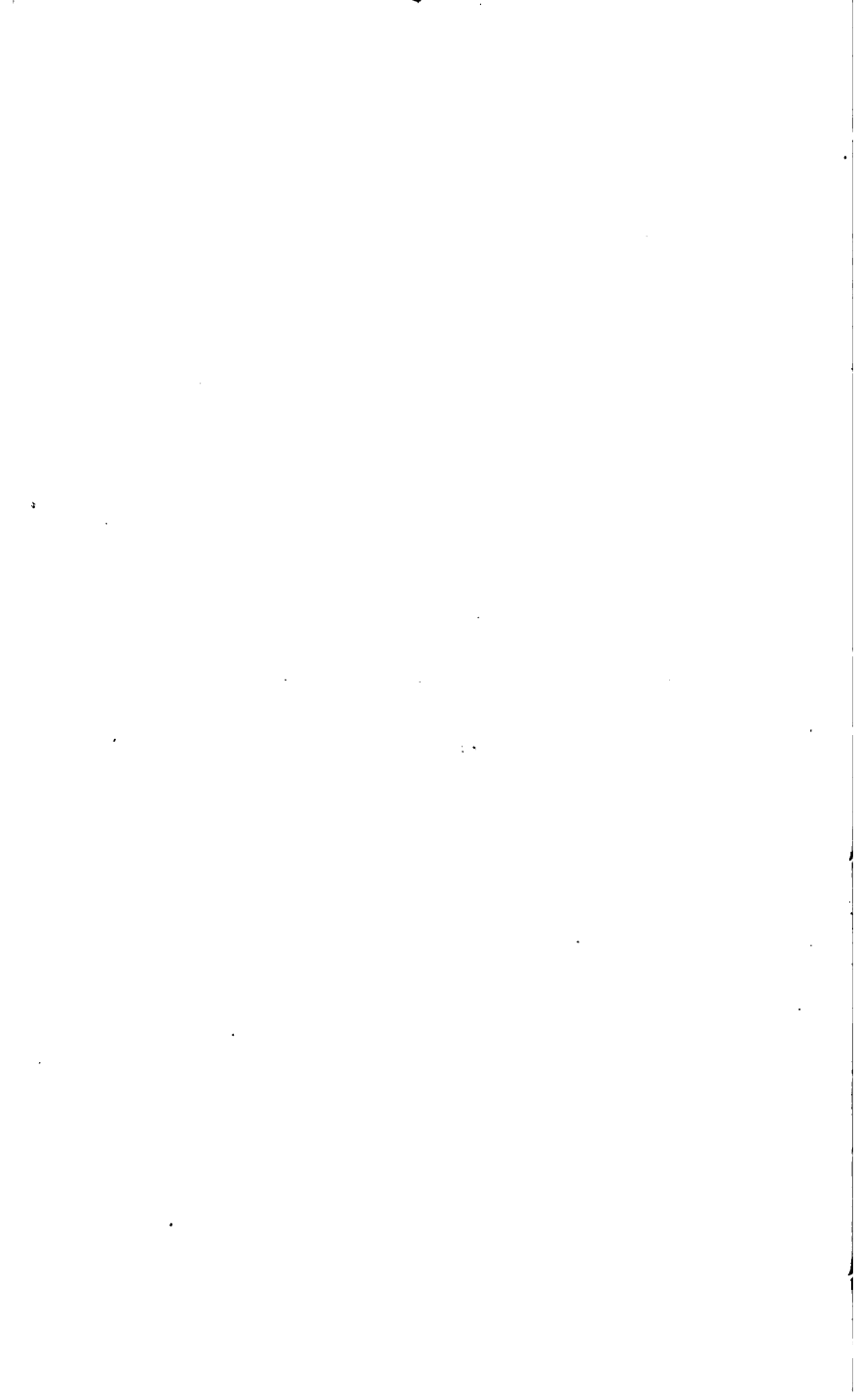
CONTENTS.

	Page
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF JOHN ROBY - - -	1
MUSIC.	
AIR FROM A MODERN CONCERTO - - -	121
SHEW PITY, LORD - - -	122
LYRICS.	
LINES WRITTEN ON THE DEPARTURE OF FRIENDS FROM	
ENGLAND - - -	127
PREFACE TO A LADY'S ALBUM - - -	129
TO ——— - - -	132
STANZAS - - -	133
STANZAS FOR MUSIC - - -	134
THE FAIRIES' SONG - - -	136
STANZAS FOR MUSIC - - -	137
STANZAS FOR MUSIC - - -	138
STANZAS FOR MUSIC - - -	139
STANZAS - - -	140
SONG - - -	141
THE FRIEND - - -	143
LINES TO A LADY WHOM THE AUTHOR HAD NEVER SEEN -	145
THE BIRCH - - -	147
ASTROLOGY - - -	148
THE FIRST REVELATION - - -	149
AN EVENING HYMN - - -	151
THE DUKE OF MANTUA : A Tragedy - - -	153
LEGENDS.	
MOTHER RED CAP ; OR, THE ROSICRUSIANS - - -	247
THE DEATH PAINTER ; OR, SKELETON'S BRIDE - - -	305
THE CRYSTAL GOBLET, a Tale of the Emperor Severus -	339
APPENDIX - - -	375

WEEP NO MORE, WOFUL SHEPHERDS, WEEP NO MORE,
FOR LYCIDAS YOUR SORROW IS NOT DEAD,
SUNK THOUGH HE BE BENEATH THE WATERY FLOOR ;
SO SINKS THE DAY-STAR IN THE OCEAN BED,
AND YET ANON REPAIRS HIS DROOPING HEAD,
AND TRICKS HIS BEAMS, AND WITH NEW-SPANGLED ORE
FLAMES IN THE FOREHEAD OF THE MORNING SKY ;
SO LYCIDAS SUNK LOW, BUT MOUNTED HIGH,
THROUGH THE DEAR MIGHT OF HIM THAT WALK'D THE WAVES,
WHERE OTHER GROVES, AND OTHER STREAMS ALONG,
WITH NECTAR PUKE HIS OOZY LOCKS HE LAVES,
AND HEARS THE UNEXPRESSIVE NUPTIAL SONG,
IN THE BLEST KINGDOMS MEEK OF JOY AND LOVE.
THERE ENTERTAIN HIM ALL THE SAINTS ABOVE,
IN SOLEMN TROOPS AND SWEET SOCIETIES,
THAT SING, AND SINGING IN THEIR GLORY MOVE,
AND WIPE THE TEARS FOR EVER FROM HIS EYES.

MILTON.

SKETCH
OF
THE LITERARY LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF
JOHN ROBY.



S K E T C H,

&c. &c.

WHEN an author's name is chiefly known by a work connected with any particular locality, our natural expectations are gratified in finding that personal or family associations drew his attention to the subject. This was the case with the author of "The Traditions of Lancashire." Born in a neighbourhood where the faint legends of the olden time were yet floating, he himself belonged to the district whose memorials he perpetuated. He was attached to his native county, proud of her wild scenery, of her old historic associations, and of the energetic, well-defined character of her sons. His family name was not unknown in her annals. One of his ancestors, Captain Roby, who was born in an old mansion, long since pulled down, in the township of Roby, near Liverpool, was distinguished by his courage and gallant conduct during the civil wars of the seventeenth century, at the time when the north was the scene of operations.

JOHN ROBY was born at Wigan, the 5th of January

1793. From his father, NEHEMIAH ROBY, who was for many years master of the grammar-school at Haigh, he inherited a fine constitution and unbending principles of honour and integrity. From the family of his mother, MARY ASPULL, he derived the quick impressive temperament of genius and that love of humour which so conspicuously marks the Lancashire character.

Destitute of home companions of his own age, being by many years the youngest of the family, he often suffered from an oppressive sense of loneliness. One of his strongest characteristics was an intense yearning for sympathy, however concealed in after-life, from the general eye, by the exuberance of his natural spirits. This led him to seek companionship with inanimate things, which he invested with a sympathetic existence. A reflected light proceeding from the surface of water in a butt at the back of the house, which frequently played on the upper wall of the staircase, was one of these friendly objects. Ignorant of the cause, he would watch for its coming, and sit for hours in communion with the strange and beautiful appearance. It was to him a fair and mysterious visitant, who came in pure benevolence to cheer his solitude. Indicative of the dramatic bent of his mind was another of his resources. He was accustomed to cut out little paper figures of men and women, which he would carry to bed and place under his pillow. As soon as the light was withdrawn he delighted himself in conversations with

his paper friends, losing his sense of loneliness in their ideal companionship.

Another thing contributed to deepen his unsatisfied longing for sympathy. His father revered the sterner virtues, and sacrificed to them whatever he apprehended might tend to enervate his son's character. In conformity with this theory of training, even the maternal kiss was forbidden. Only once did he remember feeling the soft pressure of his mother's lips on his cheek, though frequently and fervently did he long to feel it again. In after-life, even down to its close, when rejoicing in the sunshine of confiding and playful affection, he would refer with tears in his eyes to the lonely and unfondled years of childhood. For the sake of both, deeply was it to be regretted, that a mother's love of her latest born, one of the strongest of human affections, should be denied its natural expression, repressed as a duty, till it was subdued and its very existence scarcely suspected.

His thirst for knowledge was early and strongly manifested. If his inquiries were neglected or evaded, he would insist on an intelligible reply. Having been once told, not to be so inquisitive, " 'Inquisitive' wants to know " was ever after his form of urgent appeal. Characteristic of this disposition was an incident which occurred when he was a child in petticoats. One fine afternoon 'Inquisitive' was seated in a low chair by his mother's side, conning his lesson. He loved not a task from which he gained no idea; the spelling of *t-h-e*, *the*,

f-o-r, for, was wearisome, and, as an expedient to rid himself of it, he feigned sleep: his father entering the room remarked, "John is asleep: this warm afternoon has made him drowsy." The mother knew the pranks of childhood, and quietly replied, "He is only sleeping dog's sleep." There was a new idea: up started the little head in a moment with the inquiry, "What is dog's sleep, mother?" Even at that early age, when a question suggested itself, he could not rest till he had arrived at a satisfactory answer; often and long would he ponder over some little thing that puzzled him, and on which he could gain no information from others beyond the unsatisfactory reply "*Why, so it is.*"

As he grew up into boyhood surrounded by objects to which tradition had assigned her marvellous stories, they sank silently into his companionless and sensitive spirit. In his immediate vicinity were Haigh Hall, and Mab's Cross, the scenes of Lady Mabel's sufferings and penance—the subject of one of his earliest tales. Almost within sight of the windows through which, with the dreamy gaze of childhood, he first looked on earth and sky, lay the fine range of hills of which Rivington Pike is a spur. Never will be forgotten the pleasure with which, fifty years afterwards, during the last summer of his life, when travelling past that neighbourhood, he pointed out the roof and chimneys of his birthplace, the well-remembered hills as they lay with the beautiful light of the afternoon sun upon them, Hoghton Tower crowning its woody steep, and other

spots at once the haunts of early days and the scenes of the legends he afterwards so beautifully re-embodied.

His various talents were very early called forth. While yet a child he was accustomed, at first occasionally, and then regularly, to take the organ at the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel, Wigan, during the Sunday service. His ear was exquisitely true, and his voice also excellent; but, used too freely at the period of its change, it never afterwards fully regained its tone.

His first attempt at drawing was made when he was a very little fellow. A lady with whom he was a special favourite—Miss Leigh, sister of the late Sir Robert Holt Leigh—had one day, to his great delight, been showing him some sketches, when, after he had looked at them, she placed the drawing of a cow before him, saying,

“Now cannot you draw that cow?”

“Oh, no! I never did such a thing,” was his reply;

“Try,” her wise rejoinder.

With some persuasion the volatile child was induced to attempt the task. The pencil was poised—his attention concentrated on the subject—his hand began to follow the eye, and with oft-repeated delight he beheld the form grow rapidly under his touch; so that whether his teacher or himself was the more pleased, it would be difficult to say. This was a precious lesson to him, which he did not forget. It was so firmly

rooted, that, in after-life, he never doubted success in anything he thought proper to attempt. Years after, in 1849, when writing to a friend whom he wished to encourage to mental effort, he referred to this time, when the little word "Try" was the "Open Sesame" of the "Arabian Nights" to him.

He cared little for ordinary companions, never so happy as when he could steal away from them, into the company of such of the other sex as were much older than himself, and listen for hours to song and music. He always considered he was more indebted for the formation of his habits and the development of his character and talents, as in the instance above, to woman's discriminating encouragement, than to anything else; and, for weal or for woe, hers was an influence to which he was ever peculiarly sensitive.

The education he received appears to have been rather desultory. The dry and spiritless mode of conveying instruction in those days had neither attractions for his taste, nor power over his mind. As he advanced into youth, and "macadamised his own road," various branches of the natural sciences, history, antiquities, and the fine arts, nearly absorbed his attention. A course of mathematical study would probably have been the best discipline for him at this time, as a balance to the spontaneous development of his imagination. He afterwards pursued it with great enjoyment, though to no considerable extent; and, late in life, he proposed a

resumption of the study to the companion of his pursuits—one of the many plans so suddenly and so mournfully cut short.

When he entered on life, and the duties of his profession, that of a banker, early left him master of many leisure hours, the use of the pencil was a favourite recreation. His artistic perceptions must have been very early developed. He was acquainted with a gentleman a professed virtuoso, and a collector of those fine old drawings and sketches which are the first rough thoughts of the painter, or the playful offspring of his lighter moments. In an unpublished MS. he thus describes in the third person his own first introduction to the beauties of the old masters:—

“A new faculty seemed dawning upon him. He felt their glorious power exalting, refining, the sense by the wondrous potency of art; rendering the forms and hues seen by the imagination visible to the bodily as to the mental eye; and expressing in a tangible shape what had before existed only in the hidden recesses of the soul. He saw for the first time a few of the random sketches, the first bright thoughts of these great men, struck out like sparks from the glowing embers of fancy. The fire and freedom of such rude scratches were pointed out; and he could see with a painter's eye the beauty of a line, the combination and the arrangement, the first shadowy thoughts of the artist emerging from chaos into form.” That he possessed even then, to a considerable extent, the artist's power as well as his

perception, may be inferred from an anecdote of those days which forms the conclusion of the passage:—

“The professor of *vertu* was expatiating one day, to a group of bystanders, on the merits of some little gem of a drawing he had just purchased. He pointed out the beauties with great gusto, fully impressing his auditory with a sense of the profound knowledge and superiority of his own discrimination. The novice leaned over, and, young as he was, enjoyed the dissertation vastly. In a while he ventured to make a remark: the man of art turned round, and with a look of contempt, intended to extinguish the youthful aspirant, said, ‘We don’t allow you to be a judge, sir.’ Abashed, he shrank back; but the wound rankled, and he determined to have lusty revenge. He sketched on paper, with great freedom and carelessness, the subject of an old etching, imitating as nearly as possible the style he had previously seen. By the judicious application of tobacco-juice, soot, bistre, ochre, and a little grease, so as to make the picture a perfect pattern of dirt,—a rent, a puncture, a piecing here and there, to show the care with which it had been preserved,—he succeeded in making, as he thought, a tolerable imitation, and with great glee gallanted off the prize to his preceptor. The connoisseur at once pronounced the few bold strokes, every one of which ‘told,’ to be those of a master; and his pupil had much difficulty in evading his inquiries, as to where he had met with it, and whether there were any more to be had.” His success was complete; but

neither love of triumph, nor gratified vanity, tempted him to divulge the secret, and thereby mortify his acquaintance: he was satisfied with the result of the experiment, nor did he ever after repeat it.

His first attempt at composition was called forth by a friend, who put into his hand a copy of a periodical which, at that time, offered prizes for the best essays on prescribed subjects, to be sent in by young persons under a specified age. It was suggested to him, that he should take one of the subjects, and see what he could make of it. He at first hesitated; but, recalling the magic power of the little word "TRY," he sat down to the task, and composed an essay:—"To show what obligations parents and children are under to tutors and governesses, and how far it is their duty, from gratitude and interest, to behave towards them with friendship and respect." It was considered worthy of the prize, as appears from a copy of Blair's Class-book,—in the fly-leaves of which the essay is preserved,—bearing in the customary gilt letters the inscription,

"PRESENTED TO MASTER JOHN ROBY, AGED FIFTEEN.

A REWARD OF MERIT."

Now fairly aware of his powers, to the pleasures of the pencil were added those of the pen. As might be expected, Poetry, Essay, Tale, were all tried, read at first to juvenile companions, as extracts he had met with. Why should early authorship, like early love, be a thing we shrink from avowing, even to the nearest of

our friends? It is because, when we write truthfully and earnestly, we lay bare our very soul; and the avowal in this, as in the other case, becomes an exposure of one's inner self.

Debating and Philosophical societies ere long attracted him, and he evidently exerted a leading influence on his companions. He took a prominent part in their projects and reunions. "Sucking in knowledge like a sponge," as he afterwards said, he was as ready to impart it. A silver snuff-box, — still prized as a relic of his eighteenth or nineteenth year, — bearing the following inscription,

"THE GIFT OF THE PHILOSOPHIC SOCIETY, WIGAN,
TO THEIR
ESTEEMED LECTURER AND WORTHY MEMBER,
MR. J. ROBY,"

attests the nature of his early pursuits, and the estimation in which he was then held by his associates.

The local press was another channel for the exercise of his talents; and it appears by a letter from the editor of the "Chester Courant," preserved with other relics of early days, that some of his contributions to the paper, during a short residence in that city, attracted the notice of the London papers, and were copied into their columns, — a fact on which the worthy editor rather prided himself, while he congratulated his unknown correspondent. From a memorandum book in handwriting of an early date, containing "Subjects for

Consideration," we transcribe one page to indicate favourite directions of thought:—

"The oxydation of metals, by passing the electric spark through them.

"The faculty which the eye possesses of accommodating its focal distance to objects placed at different distances.

"The sound which proceeds from the shock of the particles of the air, against those of water in motion. Vide Thomson's Ann. Phil. p. 187.

"Fresh-discovered property of the syphon "

He had now found, in part at least, that companionship and sympathy for which he had so earnestly longed, and his spirit gave itself up to delighted converse with its fellows, and to the pursuits of literature and art :

" All the glowing future, one
Wide atmosphere of light."

His preference even from childhood of cultivated female society, while his reverence for woman and his standard of her excellence were equally high, also contributed to keep the tone of his mind pure and his life stainless. The dawn of existence thus brightened into the full morning of youth : and if those who now fondly look back upon him with affection and pride, may bless GOD for such a youth, it is owing, under His blessing, to the love of art, knowledge, and woman's intelligent society.

Yet his own estimate of his character at that period

should not be lost sight of. When referring to this time, in terms of thankfulness for having been kept from outward evil, he ever owned that as yet he was without the guidance of the true Christian principle—love to GOD; “that ‘the light of the glorious Gospel,’ which alone is the true ‘lamp unto our path,’ had not yet shone into his spirit. *He lived only to himself*; and though, soaring through natural bias to loftier pursuits, thus kept from the grovelling propensities of youth, yet, in a religious point of view, *his heart* was, equally with that of others, the barren wilderness, *destitute of fruit to the glory of Him who created it*, and who demands our ‘heart, and soul, and strength,’ in His service.” So judged a mature self-knowledge, on looking back to the first years of manhood. Were introspection always as faithful, might not the same conclusion be oftener reached?

Hitherto the little bark had sped with no cross wind, no disturbing current, no shadow on her sail. Love came: still life’s glad waters were unruffled—all sunshine and repose. But the storm soon gathered, and life’s first romance was destined to close in gloom. It will be readily supposed, that, with the impassioned temperament of genius, he gave himself up without reserve to the power of a *first-love*; and, with the adhesiveness which Phrenology so largely assigned to him, the permanence of his attachment promised to equal its intensity. For a time, “the course of true love,” *did* “run smooth;” but at length a coldness he

could not account for, but which had for some time pained him, led on his part to remonstrance. It was resented, and the interview ended in mutual displeasure. Riding home, — not in the happiest mood, — his horse stumbled and threw him. For a few days he lay, unable to travel, in a house near the spot where he had been thrown. Humbler and wiser thoughts prevailed; and the first use he made of his recovered power of moving, was to return and seek another interview. Reconciliation followed, and he left happy and reassured. But, the evening after his arrival at home, a short, cold, and haughty epistle, brought him by private hand, forbade his future visits. Stung to the quick by what appeared heartlessness, if not duplicity, he resolved to forget his idol for ever; and looked around for a worthier object in whose affection he might lose his sense of injury and regret. It was not till his faith was plighted to another that he discovered the *undated* note was written previously to his last visit, shortly after their angry parting, but owing to his absence from home not sooner delivered. Honour forbade any allusion to this circumstance to the object of the second attachment, to whom he considered himself sacredly engaged, but the blow struck home. A severe illness, during which his life was despaired of, supervened; and, though an elastic nature recovered, it still retained traces of this “maddening misery.” More than thirty years afterwards he could not refer to these passages of his history without a shudder, and intense, though

controlled, feeling. Some peculiarities referable to this source remained through life. Henceforth a discord ran through all the melodies of existence, and ever and anon reproduced itself in the creations of imagination.

Mr. Roby first appeared before the world as a poet. In 1815 he published "Sir Bertram, a poem in six cantos." Elegant and melodious versification, exquisite word-painting, and a marked tendency to the use of the supernatural, are its chief characteristics. Though not published before, there is every reason to believe it was composed some time previously, during the happy season of hopeful, if not formally requited, love. Here are no traces to be found of that one sorrow. It was the pouring forth of song from a poetic spirit, that as yet knew not the power of the minor key. Another poem quickly followed, entitled "Lorenzo, a tale of Redemption." It met with a limited sale: the versification was heavy, unlike anything else he ever wrote, and the subject was unsuited to his powers. The now venerable poet Montgomery, who had just published his own "Greenland," gave the young author the benefit of his judicious criticism, a kindness difficult to perform; but, judging by a letter from him of the date of July, 1817, he knew well how to combine candour and courtesy. The subsequent productions of his disciple proved that his valuable suggestions were not thrown away.

In 1816 Mr. Roby married Ann, the youngest daughter of James and Dorothy Bealey, of Derriken

near Blackburn. Of her many excellencies he ever spoke in the highest terms, and she must have been, from the testimony of all who had the pleasure of knowing her, as well as from that of her husband, one of the best and gentlest of women, the most affectionate and anxious of mothers. They had nine children, three of whom died in their infancy.

“The Duke of Mantua,” a tragedy, which appeared in 1823, was Mr. Roby’s next publication. It went through three or four editions in a short time, and was pronounced by the critics, “worthy of a place among our best closet plays.” It has been long out of print, and is included in the present volume.

In the course of the summer, he made an excursion in Scotland. He visited “the bonnie braes of Yarrow,” in company with Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. His account of the day so pleasantly spent, is a good specimen of his early prose style:—

“I went with Hogg the other morning on a ‘*Voyage pittoresque*’ up the Yarrow. It was a delicious Claude-looking day—the sky filled with a warm hazy brightness. Every cloud stole as softly up the firmament, as if some creature ‘of the immaterial air’ melting into the blue ether. None of those sudden lights—those breaks through a hard and almost impenetrable pile of clouds—an Apennine or Andes poised in the middle air, dividing the landscape into vast enclosures—masses of shadow, deep, awful, and abrupt—or moving patches, of a wild and unnatural brightness.

“We set out from Selkirk pretty early, intending to reach St. Mary’s before noon. We loitered lazily up the

stream, imbibing the keen freshness of the morning. The mists were just rolling from the green hills, when, on passing the bridge, we turned to our left, entering upon the beautiful road, leading through the Duke of Buccleugh's grounds, to Altrieve and St. Mary's Loch. The Yarrow and the Ettrick unite about two miles above Selkirk. Following the course of the former, we soon spied the ruins of Newark Castle, the scene of Sir Walter's 'Lay of the Last Minstrel.' It is a massive square tower, now unroofed, surrounded by an outward wall, and defended by round flanking turrets. During the minority of the present Duke, the castle was dilapidated; the wooden beams, and such stones as could be removed, were employed in building a miserable farmhouse in its vicinity.

"I felt wishful to obtain a closer inspection of this fine old specimen of border antiquity; more especially on learning that Mungo Park—born at Foulshiels, a small farm within a stone's throw of the castle—had left his autograph somewhere within its walls. We soon procured admittance, and on climbing the ruined staircase, entered a large roofless apartment on the second story, where, sure enough, we found, without much trouble, the name of our enterprising, but unfortunate, countryman, written, two or three times, in a large clerk-like hand with *red chalk*. Hogg seemed as well pleased as if he had found a 'poss,' and rummaged his galligaskins for a hideous bit of scrawl, that he had several times brought forth from its dark den, during our journey, when any thing particularly inspiring had urged its momentary liberation. A poem perhaps, another exquisite 'Kilmeny' or 'Mary Lee' in embryo, undergoing its appointed period of incubation. I made no inquiries, but continued undisturbed in the great business of exploration. In a short time I heard him bundling down the steps, to take a morning's gossip with the keeper. It was not long ere I found myself amply repaid for any sense of deprivation I

might have endured, by discovering another flourish with the identical red chalk, and evidently by the same hand. It was a stanza—four lines of poetry by Mungo Park!—If thou hast any touch of feeling—any mark of kindred—any spark of rarer sympathy—imagine, if thou canst, my delight,—the fervour, the intensity of my rapture. They fixed indelibly, and almost involuntarily on my memory ; — there they now exist, and probably will continue until every faculty, every function, be obliterated.

“The following is a true copy, spelling and all. The orthography of poor Park was not of the purest kind : —

‘ Within these walls where obscene birds of night
Whistle and shriek alternate round,
Soft music *floted* once, whilst with delight
The distant shepherd caught the dying sound.’

“I do not think they show marks of quotation. I hope and believe they are original ; at least, I am pretty certain they have not before been noticed.

“I soon roused the skulkers : a vigorous hurrah was the first intimation they had of the enemy being so near their camp. Bang went the first door I came to, and there I found my friend and his, cantie over a cup of the best mountain, and deep in the heart of a thrifty controversy about sheep, their ailments and cures. It was ‘an awfu downcome ;’ they stared at each other without perfectly understanding the nature of my announcement. On a repetition, ‘Eh, Mr. Bogle, but ye’re gone clean blate,’ was the rejoinder, ‘Ha’ ye seen a ghaist!’ With some difficulty I made them reluctantly comprehend two very important matters, to wit, my meaning, and a request that they would give me their sweet company awhile. But how they did shout, and rub their sleeves at the discovery ; we looked as funny at one another as three ambassadors at a congress.

It was as good as the development of a state secret. The best of it is, that it will be a little fortune to the keeper, and a dowry to his weans. Henceforth pilgrimages will be made to the shrine, vieing with Loch Katrine and the pass of Aberfoil in the number of its votaries and the ardour of its worshippers.

"We bade good bye to Newark, and awa' up the braes o' Yarrow, shouting and laughing with the wild echoes of the flood, to the great dismay of sundry bare-legged Naiads and goddesses, peeping ever and anon through 'covert green and woodland dell.'

"My companion had to make a call at his tailor's, who inhabits the low house nigh to the Ford.—A very strange personage this, but of an infinite humour, and pomposity of demeanor.

"It was the very man whom Blackwood accused in one of his 'magi,' of regularly buying two copies of that work, and reading both, from beginning to end, imagining them to be diverse and distinct from each other. He was mightily affronted at this insinuation, and duly wrote, and concocted a letter;—such a curiosity as was never before seen, since the world whistled. I recollect being indulged with a sight of it in the 'back-shop.' He utterly disclaimed taking two copies of the magazine, under any such erroneous impression. The true reason was, that wife and bairns had such an 'ettling for the beuk' that he had no comfort on the occasion, and was often obliged to run for it—to creep behind a stone dike or into a hedge bottom, in the hope of getting free from their importunities, and even then he was in no wise safe from interruption,—some kind neighbour or another would scent him out, and be 'aye licken his fingers frae the dish.' Taking two copies set all to rights, and each party enjoyed their meal in peace. He was dreadfully puzzled about the different 'Horæ' scattered through the numbers, and consulted the minister about their refer-

ence to certain matters then abroad, but to which he thought no decent respectable publication, like Blackwood, should have alluded.

"We journeyed on to Altrieve, where Hogg has a quiet domicile within sight of St. Mary's banks, and Dryhope tower, where 'the flower of Yarrow lived and died.' It was high dinner hour when we arrived. A hearty welcome—a dish of boiled trout fresh from the Lake, and *et ceteras ad lib.*, gave a *gout* and a relish to the succeeding conceptions and concoctions, over which Mrs. Hogg presided,—while the exhilarating influence of high animal spirits, and a 'wee drappie' of the elixir of the mountain, threw a vivid hue and a glowing atmosphere around every theme on which we dilated.

"Hogg is a kind-hearted creature, a man of the rarest genius, compounded out of the most heterogeneous elements, as if nature in one of her freaks had determined to evince the omnipotence of her power, over the most untractable, and unpromising materials,—to mould even the stubborn, and unyielding forms over which she broods, into combinations of the most exquisite symmetry, and delicacy of texture.

"I reckon Hogg's achievements on a par with the most wonderful records of human capability extant. A shepherd's boy, as uncouth and ungifted as any of his tribe—apparently without a glimmer, or an idea of the beautiful or sublime, any further than as it might have relation to a dry bed and a comfortable meal—scarcely able to write his name at a very advanced period of growth. Now he blazes forth, a bright intelligence amongst the lights of the age. Really his works deserve to form part and parcel of our national literature, at once a monument to his glory and an inextinguishable record of the operations of that genius, who setteth no bounds to her habitation, nor suffereth control."

The literary leisure of the next six years was occupied in collecting materials for the *Traditions of Lancashire*, and by the creative power of imagination, weaving them into tales of romantic interest. Mr. Roby received the most courteous assistance from several of the representatives of the noble houses, whose early history he elucidated; particularly from the Earl and late Countess of Crawford and Balcarres, and also from the late Earl of Derby, (1853).

The commencement of the year 1827 was marked by one of those home events, which, though nothing to the world, make sad change in the fire-side circle. Mr. Roby's second boy, named after his brother, the late Rev. William Roby, of Manchester, was at this time about three years of age. Possessed of unusual loveliness and remarkable sensibility for so young a child, he had won upon his parents' hearts, and on that of his father to a remarkable degree. The moment he entered the house, he would call for his darling boy, and place him on his knee at the piano, while the little listener, if not interrupted, would remain for hours rapt in delight. He could not be happy while the child was out of his sight. After a very brief illness, this beautiful boy was called away from the world. His father's heart was wrung, long did he mourn him; and he never dared again to love a child with such idolatry. An infant, a few months' old, had before been laid in the family grave, and on the stone covering their remains, Mr. Roby had the following lines engraven: —

“Farewell sweet babes ! Upon a mother’s breast
Ye pass’d life’s hour of fretfulness and pain :
Death bids you on his colder bosom rest,
Herald of bliss ; — unutterable gain !
His touch was life ! — in robes of triumph drest,
Sinless and spotless now — a Saviour’s death
The fountain opened — washed from every stain
Each spirit, ere its last faint quivering breath —
As o’er its eyeballs burst eternal day,
Left its first cherub smile to linger on its clay.”

A third infant was laid beside them in 1832, and there now repose *his own* loved and most precious remains, and to these last, as to those for whom they were originally intended, may the closing lines be applied. The smile last seen on that beloved face is one with which it may well awake on the morning of the resurrection.

Mr. Roby visited the English Lakes that year. A manuscript book of notes and sketches remains, and both pen and pencil attest the quickness and correctness of the observer. On ordinary objects he looked with an eye practised in gaining general information, and on Nature with that of the artist. In looking over the sketches one cannot but remark how very little change years have made in that district. Not only the majestic objects of Nature, the accessories of man’s placing also, stood then precisely as they do now. The Druid’s Circle near Keswick seems the only exception ; the fir trees which then waved their dark branches above the grey stones are gone. Grange, reposing at the foot

of Borrowdale, with its beautiful bridge, dark clear stream, and everlasting mountains a close back-ground. The Bowder stone*, its ladder and cottage, and the sharply-defined perpendicular strata rising above all, are unchanged. The sketches of a quarter of a century ago might be those of last year. The very buildings seem identically the same in every part. Nature stamped them picturesque as they were set down in her sacred recesses, and they have not dared to throw off the spell. A few extracts from the note-book will exemplify the style of observation. The aspect of the district; the manners of its inhabitants; individual peculiarities whatever of men or things; natural productions, and above all, the ever-varying forms of beauty, with which nature in such a region clothes herself,—none of these escaped his observant and admiring eye.

“Kendal, Aug. 21. 1827.

“Dialect. Kendal mode of calling a person up, ‘*Shoot on him* there.’ First view of Windermere. Writing on Inn

* The notion of this huge stone being a boulder stone—perhaps from Norway, which was long believed, is now exploded. A friend at Keswick (Sept. 1853) writes me word that the Porphyritic greenstone of which it is composed, runs through many parts of the Lake district, in the immediate neighbourhood, and that this stone must have fallen from the cliff just above. My informant adds, that Mr. Wright, the well known guide, in company with a gentleman, measured the stone and the cavity whence it fell, and found them to correspond; though the cavity is now somewhat overgrown by grass, it is not difficult to perceive.

Windows—This perishable and frail tablet more durable than man's existence. Mountains—The same outline, the same aspect has met the eye of man for thousands of years. . . . On the Lake—View from the north side of Curwen's Island, light and shadow disposed as if according to art—broad lights upon the rich colours. Corn-fields &c. near—summits of hills dark blue, cutting against the sky, angular and sharp. Island follows the universal law—north by west, rugged and mountainous; south, undulating and flat."

Grasmere was at that time the abode of the gifted and excentric Hartley Coleridge. He was standing at Jonathan's door when the tourists drove up. They soon made acquaintance with him, and it was not long ere they were deep in discussion on the subject of Kant's Philosophy, the Rosicrucian System, &c. &c.

"The repose of Grasmere; pleasures of retirement. No pleasure but to those who possess an innate repose and a mind full of susceptibilities for these beautiful impressions. The bold dragoon and his wife, who took a house here about three months since, for seven years,—are now heartily tired of it. Confounding of phrases—to say a man *is* a genius, great mistake—rather say a man *has* genius, or rather genius has *him*. Often disappointed in our approach to 'reputed geniuses.' A clever man not always a man of genius. Idiom and dialect diffused over a man's very form and face, habits, and character. Tone of voice acquired by contact. Strong voices of the females generally in the north. Quite a literary air about Grasmere. Proof sheets lying about the public-house. Hartley Coleridge engaged in writing the article 'Poetry' in the 'Encyclopedia Metropolitana.'" The notice of Grasmere concludes with a then unpublished song by H. Coleridge—" 'I have lived, and I have loved,' " with the autograph of the Poet.

"Keswick Lake. Sun-set. Colour of the mountains

blue, a band between the fiery sky, and the fiery reflection in the lake. Cloudy morning. Skiddaw still has his night-cap on. Clearing towards seven, determine to mount. Pass Skiddaw's cub, Latrigg. Hills tumbled about in great disorder, compared to a large painted sheet of canvass thrown down horizontally and propped up in different places underneath with pointed sticks of various lengths. Eye soon accustoming itself to the size of objects thereby diminishing their bulk to its own previous conceptions. Every now and then obliged to find an object, of a known size, in order to feel the vast dimensions of these objects of unknown magnitude . . . Gaining the summit, an envious cloud sweeping round the hill. Double echoes apparently from grouse shooters. Cloud rapidly approaches, falls between us and the distant prospect like a curtain. Completely enveloped. Sit down wrapped in my cloak under the lee-side of a huge heap of stones, and wait in expectation of the cloud clearing off for nearly an hour. Quietly read 'Otley's Guide,' Geology of the Mountains. Symptoms of a break in the cloud, mist still continues. Guide relates the dangers and perils of ascents and descents in a mist, even to those well acquainted with the path . . . During these amusing and exhilarating narratives the mist breaks in partial openings—Wonderful bursts of prospect through the clouds. Solway Frith—the Sea—Wigton, Cockermouth, Bassenthwaite Lake. A vessel on the Solway, by telescope, a brig.

"Hermitage near Derwentwater Lake. Major Pocklington built and endowed it for any person who would live there in entire seclusion, locked up for seven years; after this apprenticeship he might, if he thought proper, have his liberty, and an annuity of 100*l.* a year. No one has yet been found to fulfil this engagement, and the place built twenty or thirty years ago.

"Borrowdale. Lead mine on very steep hill. Gryphite

lies in sops. Old levels worked out. **At** fault; cannot yet find any; trying near the summit of the hill. **Immense** productiveness at times. Supposed to have been once in a state of fusion. Evident marks of this. No date of its discovery. Tradition tells us, that a tree being blown down bared the first vein. Used for marking sheep only in all probability at the first. Maps of the county might be printed on pocket-handkerchiefs. Dine at Rossthwaite: another party arrive, folly of not being content with what the house affords

“Patterdale. Met a young sheep dog.—One leg tied up to prevent his scampering after the sheep too far—dog education; not beat young dogs, it breaks their spirits and spoils them. May this hint apply to the education of two-legged cubs? Beautiful and fertile valleys running up into so many gorges of the mountains . . . Musty egg at breakfast. Irishman swearing not a hen in all England that laid fresh eggs. . . . Kirkstone pass. Savage sublimity of the road. Kirkstone like the gable end of a house peeping above. *Saxifraga Nivalis* . . . High moor between the lakes and Kendal. Grand view of Langdale Pikes twenty miles off, like immense buttresses or towers, supporting a long line of rocks.” Of all the beautiful objects in that district none excited Mr. Roby’s admiration as those two magnificent rocks. His enthusiasm for them was unbounded.

The first series of the Traditions of Lancashire appeared in 1829, in two volumes, illustrated by plates engraved by Finden, from drawings by Pickering; and wood-cuts by Williams, after designs by Frank Howard. The matter, the embellishments, and the spirited publishers, Messrs Longman and Co., were alike worthy of

each other. The reception of the work equalled Mr. Roby's most sanguine expectations; for though the price, demy 8vo., 2*l.* 2*s.*, royal 8vo., with proofs and etchings, 4*l.* 4*s.*, made it rather a book for a gentleman's library than for general circulation, a second edition was called for within twelve months. The following note from Sir Francis Palgrave, no incompetent judge, was a gratifying estimate of the work as forming part of our national literature:—

“26, Duke-street, Westminster,
26th October, 1829.

“Sir,

“I am greatly obliged to you for the very interesting volumes which you have had the kindness to send me.

“As compositions, the extreme beauty of your style, and the skill which you have shown in working up the rude materials, must entitle them to the highest rank in the class of works to which they belong.

“Are there any peculiar traditions in or about Cartmel, where, as you probably know, the Britons continued till a comparatively late period? You have made such a valuable addition, not only to English literature, but to English topography by your collection—for these popular traditions form, or ought to form, an important feature in topographical history—that it is to be hoped you will not stop with the present volumes.

“I have the honor to remain,

Sir,

With great respect,

Your obedient and faithful servant,

“FRANCIS PALGRAVE.”

The second series, consisting also of two volumes, uniform with the first, was published in 1831, and met with similar success. Both series were reviewed in the most cordial manner by the leading periodicals of the day; more than once quoted, and characterized by Sir Walter Scott, himself a host, as an elegant work. (*See Introduction to the Betrothed.*)

When composing, Mr. Roby usually wrote with his family around him; the only restraint he laid upon them, was the prohibition of whispering; from conversation carried on in the ordinary tone he could wholly abstract himself. Seated in a favourite rocking-chair, that common northern luxury, wrapped in a loose study-gown, he wrote for hours with rapidity and pleasure. When invention flagged, and he had to seek an idea, he would fold his arms, and gently rock for a few minutes, then with the air of a person who had found what he sought, return to the page with renewed spirit. Though undisturbed by familiar sounds, which, indeed, he appeared not to perceive, so completely was he absorbed in his ideal world, he yet required all things in order around him before he commenced; objects indiscriminately scattered conveying disturbance through the eye, or even an open door, would so effectually dissipate his thoughts, as to prevent him from writing. His practice was to make himself master of the historical ground-work of the tale, and as far as possible of the manners and customs of the period, and then to commence composition, with Fosbroke's "En-

cyclopedia of Antiquities" at hand, for accuracy of costume, &c. He always gave the credit of his style, which the Westminster Review termed "a very model of good Saxon," to his native country, the force and energy of whose dialect arises mainly from the prevalence of the Teutonic element. "The thought digs out the word," was a favourite saying, when the exact expression he wanted did not at once occur. To his fine ear for musical sound he was much indebted for the flowing ease of his diction.

Though constituting what is denominated light literature, much careful research was required in the composition of the tales. The aspect of the country in those distant times, the costume and customs of the day, were particulars in which he was scrupulously exact. To secure this truthfulness of detail, long investigations were often needed, even where perhaps they would be little suspected: but always confident that he should succeed at last, he spared no pains in ascertaining the most minute particular, and this very persuasion of success contributed to secure it. By some means or other he invariably commanded the information in due time. Amusing instances of this sometimes occurred. Once, when out of the reach of any work of reference, he was completely at fault for the blazonry of a particular banner, used five hundred years ago. He did not despair, but left the matter in blank, expecting—though he would have been puzzled to tell whence—the wished-for information would be

forthcoming. And so it was: casually looking at a review, it so happened that the very thing he wanted was described with more than ordinary minuteness.

His inexhaustible creative power is conspicuous; about two hundred different characters are introduced, no one of whom reminds the reader of another, nor is invention wanting for abundant diversity of incident and adventure, heroic and comic. A gentleman who had been reading the Traditions for the first time, recently remarked, that for invention he scarcely knew any writer Mr. Roby's equal. It is perhaps worthy of notice, that all the characters are creations, not one an idealized portrait.

Another charm is the fine mould in which his heroines are cast. There is a delicacy, a nobility, or high-minded spirit of self-sacrifice about the more prominent, which, while leaving the characters perfectly distinct, sustains throughout a high ideal of woman. Not one bad character figures as a woman; the only approach to such is in tales of witchcraft, where, indeed, the Arch Evil One, rather than his poor victim, is the criminal, as though he would not even bring the idea of evil athwart the favourite vision of his imagination. It may be deemed not adhering to nature, thus to omit an object she, alas! too often presents; but who would blame the artist for the faultless beauty of his creations? The sculptor may display his skill, by representing the contortions of deformity, but not his highest ideal; may show how clever a copyist with the chisel he can

be, but not how deeply he has drunk of the inspiration common to all art, how near he has approached to the Fountain of all Beauty. The clearness of his conceptions, and the way in which he threw himself into his characters, are evinced by the dramatic action of even the shortest story. While writing he appeared actually to feel as he would have done, had he been in the situations he described; he felt the perplexity, the sense of danger, and the exultation of escape; for the time he seemed to have a double life, at once sharing the existence of his hero, and sympathizing as a spectator. It was in a tone that he would have used, had she been a living being, that he said of one of his heroines, under very peculiar circumstances of danger *, "*I could not let her perish.*" His plan was to commence his tale, bring his characters into strange or perilous situations, realize their danger in its full extent, without the slightest idea of how he should extricate them; and then, when the means of escape presented themselves to his imagination, he would work on, delighted with the suggestion, till to his great regret the tale was finished. He knew when to leave off, but it cost him something to do so; it was like parting company with friends.

The short vivid descriptions of scenery scattered throughout, are not often equalled. By a few strokes of the pen, not only a perfect picture of the permanent objects of a locality is placed before the reader's eye,

* Esther, in the Jew of York. See Frazer's Mag. for Sept. 1836.

but also the temporary lights and shadows which are thrown on the landscape by the ever-shifting skies; the very feeling of the air does not escape him. Each tale is in fact a cabinet picture, combining history and landscape. In the foreground the traditionary group appears in vivid action; beyond, a far-receding distance, faint in the noon-tide haze, or perchance a wood, with its broad shadows, and burst of sunlight across the next glade. An artist might paint from his descriptions. In the case of one of the most effective engravings, that of *Rivington Pike*, the drawing was made after the artist had read the tale; the accessories of light and shade, and in the original, of colour also, doubtless owe something of their character to this circumstance.

In his power of depicting the supernatural, Mr. Roby stands pre-eminent; and this not only in little weird touches, that come upon the reader he knows not how, waking a chord within which makes him feel that he has kindred with mysteries more than the eye sees, or the ear hears—but in long-sustained intercourse with beings who people the unseen world, and who seem at certain times, and in certain places, to press upon mortal spirits even to recognition, more, even to hallowed or unhallowed communion. As if there were, time and space concurring, points of juncture for the two worlds. The ease with which he carries his reader along with him, even in spite of the anti-spiritual prejudices of the present age, cannot be better exemplified than in the tale to which reference has just been

made, Rivington Pike, which has been said by a German reviewer to be, "the only authentic tale of diabolical possession the English have." The composition of the story had a powerful effect on the writer himself. He sat up writing longer than usual after the rest of the family had retired. It was midnight when he had finished; and so completely had the scenes he had been describing, taken possession of his own mind, that he dared not stir from his seat, nor did he, till Mrs. Roby, surprised at his remaining down stairs so long after his accustomed time, entered the room; the sight of a familiar face broke the spell, and dissipated the visionary alarm.

The purity of the morality is such as befits a Christian writer, and there is throughout the work a spirit of reverence for things sacred, and of deference to the supreme source of illumination, which is not always to be found in our lighter literature. The reader, charmed and delighted, is carried away from ordinary scenes into a world of romance. Nevertheless in that ideal land he finds the same laws of morality which govern his daily life—the same God looked up to, as the disposer of all things, the Father at once to be loved and obeyed; and he may go back to his duties in common life, without one moral idea having been deranged, or one principle disturbed.

It was at one time Mr. Roby's intention to follow up the "Traditions of Lancashire" with similar illustrations of the early history of the county of York. Subjects were chosen, and a few tales written, which

appeared in Blackwood's and Frazer's magazines. One, though not of this series, which was published in Frazer, February 1837, under the title of "The Smuggler's Daughter," was proposed to be dramatised. The parts were cast, Mrs. Yates or Mrs. Keeley was to have taken that of the heroine, and Mr. Buckstone and Mr. O. Smith were to have engaged in others. From the correspondence on the subject, it appears that Mr. Buckstone's attention being demanded by other and rather perplexing affairs, the representation of the "Smuggler's Daughter" was delayed till after the appearance of the story in the Magazine, and at last suffered to fall to the ground.

A book containing sketches of the different localities he intended to illustrate, and memoranda of the traditions attached to them, made during excursions into Yorkshire for this purpose, show the spirit with which he entered on his task, and it is much to be regretted that anything should have been allowed to set it aside. About this time he commenced the study of botany in good earnest. In the same book are notes of a first botanical tour, a few extracts from which may not be uninteresting: they are certainly characteristic. While pursuing the details of science, he was in no danger of falling under the poet's malediction on him,

"Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes."

They appear to have been written on the spot, whenever any fresh object presented itself.

“Off to Wetherby. — Resolve to dissipate the mind. Round Hey. Trees, &c., all green, yet how beautifully diversified — cool, warm, half tints — Dr. Johnson, chaise traveller. What is that purple tuft? — Elegant! *Vicia cracca*. . . . What is that like a diminutive fir tree? *Equisetum*, quite a puzzle for a beginner; never mind, learn soon. Clover, I know; but where can it be classed? Honey-suckle too — rushes and all, I suppose, though they would puzzle to find a flower. Clouds, the soul of landscape. What sky most beautiful? Never see a dandelion, but thoughts the most intense that never die. — Where slumbering — where the great reservoir?” No flower had the power to revive early associations like this. His first recollections of it, were as growing in a field near his father’s house where he played in infancy. “Yellow flowers among the green wheat: Cherlock. Limestone district. — How delightful any occupation that keeps the mind from preying on itself. Want of employment similar to hunger. — Gastric juice eats the stomach if no food. . . . What a delicious smell! Butterfly orchis. . . . Foxglove unknown in some of the southern counties, here how luxuriant! Localities of plants, soil, &c., wants explanation. Poppy, sand, coltsfoot, clay. Furze, Linnæus. Flowers, all made after one model, never change the generic characters in whatever part of the world; proof, where there no other, of an all-wise designer. . . . Briony, spiral spring. *Orchis morio*. Something about this tribe mysterious. Children in a field playing, *enjoyment*. With what different eyes do I now look on nature. What should possess me to learn botany, all my life laughing at it. Arrangement, bump of order I suppose. Distant view of the wolds. York Minster — what a host of recollections! . . . *Iris pseudacorus*. Inoculated even the post-boy. The operation, the power of mind over mind, what is it? Country churches. People would write much better books if they would take individualities, instead of generalities, to

sermons . . The numbers three and five, how predominant in botany. *Geum urbanum*. — Lutford. Jackasses on a common — patience personified. Why should *Jack* be a diminutive, a lowering of any thing. Jack snipe, *Osmunda regalis*. — Windmills always associate with country quiet; the monotonous turn of the sails. Retreat. Lunatics: mankind all so in one respect or another, but a great difference. Lunatics lose their reasoning powers, and jumble ideas, — take those for real which are only reflection and memory, while those counted sane, with correct ideas, act diametrically opposite to their knowledge . . . Gravel-field, famous place for plants. Set out. Roman antiquities — a Roman burying place evidently, — continually digging out broken urns of baked clay, very fragile. . . . Cats without tails, a breed of them here; supposed originally from the Isle of Man. Style of face in different parts. Query, Is it caught? Lower part of the mouth formed by its owner." The notes continue, but are almost exclusively botanical.

In the spring of 1837, Mr. Roby made a rapid tour on the Continent, the notes and illustrative sketches of which were published in two volumes by Messrs. Longman and Co., under the title of "Seven Weeks in Belgium, Switzerland, Lombardy, Piedmont, Savoy, &c." His quickness, and clearness of observation, and power of placing before the reader's eye, in a few words, the objects which met his own, render the book delightful and refreshing to those whom duty detains at home. Notes were taken on the spot, and but slightly amplified, so that the narrative has all the freshness of a youthful description of a day's pleasure. If the road branches off in two directions, and the driver hardly knows which

to take, the reader himself feels puzzled, and thinks with apprehension of the nearness of the sun to the horizon, and the miles yet to be traversed; if the traveller is sailing down the lake listlessly drinking in the beauty around him, the reader, too, feels the calm repose of the still expanse of waters, and the softened grandeur of the panorama of mountains. Even "the dry hard names" of rare plants—music to the botanist—followed as they are here by their more familiar synonyms, enhance the charm of the book: we look up from the sunny surface of the glacier to the crimson flowers of the *Azalea procumbens* (trailing Azalea) starring the barren rock. Graphic description alternates with personal adventure and amusing anecdote, marked alike by vivacity of style, and the buoyant spirit of the author. Charming as a narrative of continental travel, it at the same time has been said, "as a guide book to the continent," to be "the best that was ever written,"—the sight-seer, the lover of scenery, and the botanist may use it to equal advantage. It shows how much may be secured by a really active and inquisitive mind, in a few weeks, while the full particulars respecting passports, routes, distances, moneys, exchanges, &c., puts the reader in the way of enjoying as much himself, when it falls to his lot to take the same route. The pictures of nature are in Mr. Roby's own effective style. The start from the Custom-house, termed by the "Literary Gazette" "a Calcott picture in a few lines," is an instance. "It was a calm grey morning, the popu-

lation were hardly astir, the river with its wilderness of masts seemed hardly awake ; and the very water having been suffered to rest untroubled for a space, looked dull and drowsy." The impressions made by the first sight of Alpine scenery on a mind like his, are, as it may be expected, vividly told. It was of this part of the work, that a lady, who had been familiar with good English scenery all her life, and did justice to it both by pen and pencil, remarked, "That book taught me to look at mountains."

In 1840 Mr. Roby again visited the Continent by a different route, adhering to his custom of making notes and sketches of what he saw. At the close of the same year his attention was engaged by the preparation of a new edition of the "*Traditions of Lancashire*," in a less expensive form, so as to bring it within the reach of general readers. It was published in three volumes by Colburn, as the first of a series of *Popular Traditions of England*.

Mr. Roby's delight was as great in imparting as in imbibing knowledge, and he took a warm interest in all institutions for its diffusion. The principal literary occupation of the next four years appears to have been the preparation and delivery of lectures in connexion with societies of this kind, in which his native county so eminently abounds. His early efforts, while yet residing at Wigan, and the welcome reception they met with, have been before noticed ; quite as acceptable were the matured results of reading and research now.

offered to larger and more mixed audiences. In the early autumn of 1838 he gave a course of ten lectures in the theatre, Rochdale, in aid of the Philosophic and Literary Society of that town, on botany; comprising both classification and physiology, illustrated by large diagrams painted in distemper. They were afterwards delivered at Manchester, accompanied by some beautiful experiments, made with the aid of Dr. Warwick's oxy-hydrogen microscope, kindly superintended by that gentleman, and subsequently at the Collegiate Institution, Liverpool.

The subjects of other lectures were various. A course of four, on Tradition, as connected with, and illustrating history, antiquities, and Romance, were delivered at Rochdale. Drawings executed in a bold style in black and red chalks, many of them thrown off at the time, illustrated either the localities where the various legends had birth, or the costumes, style of building, &c. of the period. One set of lectures which the writer has been so happy as to find fully written out, manifests not only his taste for art, but his knowledge of its principles. They are on painting, embracing light and shade, composition, colour, and perspective; and when delivered, were copiously illustrated, occasionally by pictures of the old masters in his possession. He was never more at home, than when ministering to the instruction or gratification of others. His talents, information, acquisitions of various kinds, whatever he might happen to possess, that could at all contribute to the purpose, were

put in requisition; and when the idea he wished to convey, or illustrate, was caught by his audience, or in private by his listening friends, his countenance became radiant with pleasure; the belief that he had been of use in any way to others, was one of his highest gratifications.

Among his MSS. are some lectures on architecture, commencing with the rude huts of barbarous tribes, and then proceeding to the structures, as far as they are known, of the ancient nations. Gothic architecture finds its place in the fifth lecture; but from the abruptness with which it breaks off in the middle of a sentence, it appears that the lectures were not completed. There are also, memoranda and rough diagrams for distinct lectures on baronial architecture.

A friend of Mr. Roby's, who was also for many years a neighbour, has kindly favoured the writer with the following recollections of some of his lectures.

“ The cheerful alacrity with which on several occasions Mr. Roby yielded to the solicitations of his fellow-townsmen, by giving gratuitous lectures to assist their Institution, was evidence of his often-expressed wish to raise his less fortunate countrymen in the scale of intellectual and social life. I often came in contact with him in connexion with the Rochdale Literary and Philosophic Society, for which he gave several lectures on Tradition, Botany, and some other subjects. His lectures on the Linnæan system of Botany, and another series on the Physiology of Plants, given before our society, were of the very first character; displaying an amount of research, and a power of analysis, combined with

most felicitous modes of illustration, rarely meeting in the same individual. The colored drawings used on these occasions, executed by himself and hisson, would have done honour to any artist. Such was the popularity of the two botanical courses, that, by request, they were repeated in Manchester, and some other neighbouring towns. In illustrating the lectures on Tradition, the rapidity with which he could throw off the gable or window of an old manor-house or any object of a similar character, was, to me, perfectly marvellous — a few touches, and the effect was produced."

The most popular of the lectures were those on the peculiarities of the Lancashire dialect. They were delivered to crowded audiences at several literary institutions, connected with different large towns in the county. In a tolerably full abstract, given by the "Preston Pilot," and in the original notes, there is ample proof of the highly interesting character of these lectures. Ethnological inquiries, full of attraction to the lovers of that science, formed the introduction, while, to a Lancashire audience, the charm of the whole must have been irresistible, and have furnished an entertainment second only to "Mathews at Home." The fund of anecdote, the rich racy humour which sparkled through the lecture, the inimitable wit of "Tummus and Meary," and the equally inimitable tones of the voice which then gave it utterance, are still fresh in the recollection of many. Had the lectures been fully written out, they would have made a charming little Christmas book, fascinating alike from the information contained, and the mirth it would provoke. The anecdotes are all

indicated in the notes by the principal word or sentence, and go far to prove what the lecturer asserted, that a Lancashire man would at any time equal an Irishman in wit.

These lectures were last delivered at Preston, in March, 1844. Having commenced the series, Mr. Roby, with characteristic determination, persisted in carrying it through, though suffering from a severe attack of influenza, which he kept at bay by force of will. Immediately on his return home his health gave way. Mischiefs had been going on for years, but the activity of his mind, and that indomitable spirit, which would bear extreme suffering before it complained, even to itself, had prevented his heeding any indications of disease, till it had pervaded the whole system. The disorder baffled medical skill; change of scene was tried in vain: as months rolled on his sufferings increased; and, though still striving to attend to professional duties, he was utterly unfit to cope with care and anxiety of any kind. Physical pain rendered him incapable of deriving pleasure from any of those sources which had heretofore afforded such rich enjoyment. Society, art, intellectual pursuits, became not only insipid but distasteful, and with this suffering a new element mingled, deep mental distress. Holy Writ speaks of such a thing as the heart not being "right in the sight of God," and a fearful consciousness that such was his own case, now became as "the arrow of the Almighty, the poison whereof drinketh up the spirit."

An increasingly vivid apprehension of the just claims of the Being who demands of His creatures, the love of "heart and mind, and soul, and strength," a deepening insight into his own nature, augmented the torturing sense of his own deficiency. In a life without reproach, spent in the discharge of duty, and in refined and ennobling pursuits, there was nothing on which self-observation, while it looked at the outward, could detect a stain. Life had hitherto been too busy, time too fully and pleasantly occupied, to afford leisure for self-inspection; but now the ordinary routine of pursuit had been broken, and involuntary retirement induced; the eye was turned within, and the result was a conviction that GOD had not thus been loved with heart, and soul, and strength; and the spirit which had so long been partially under the power of great principles, now awoke to feel that it must incorporate them with its very life—or die. Little wonder that, on a spirit whose sensibilities were at once quick and strong, and on whom impressions once made were singularly permanent, such discoveries should work agony so intense, or that those who understood not the cause of the distress, should think that reason herself was giving way. Such has often been said of others, who were passing through the same crisis of their mental history, not inaptly termed "the everlasting No!" His mind had too much play to lose its balance. A more stolid mind, or a brain like "the gentle" Cowper's, predisposed to malady, would in all probability have given way, as month

after month, year after year, rolled away and brought no relief. It was a suffering no friends could soothe; his mental conformation peculiar, — none seemed to meet its emergencies. Bodily disease no doubt aggravated mental agony, but as

“ No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels ”

So

“ No cure for such, till GOD who makes them heals.”

For a long time the only relief of which his mind was susceptible, arose from his acquaintance with one in some respects similar to his own, one which understood his sufferings perfectly, for it had known the same both in kind and in degree. The moral element in each, which recoiled from the divine requirements, must have taken precisely the same form of action. Beautiful, even from the very contrasts it presented, was the true and faithful friendship that ensued, between minds sympathising in one point of overpowering interest, though in training and pursuits widely dissimilar; and warm was the gratitude with which he ever held in remembrance those unwearied efforts to pour consolation into his tortured spirit.

To trace the mental history for three or four years, from the commencement of the illness, would be too painful, even were the subject not too sacred. Increasing physical disease, wearing trial of other kinds, asked for a spirit vigorous and happy in the Christian's

strength, to bear up against them; but instead of that the mind had at the same time woes of its own to sustain. Left to feel as it had never before felt, its own inwrought sinfulness and utter helplessness, it was borne down, crushed, only rising again to suffer anew, and again to sink. If the promises of GOD shone out as the stars in a cloudy night, it was only a momentary gleam, and dense darkness covered the face of heaven as before. Most touching are some private papers and letters, written during this period. In the former, particularly, intense yearning for the consciousness of a personal share in the Saviour's love, earnest longings to be able with appropriating faith to say "*My Father*," are expressed with an emphasis, that renders them an embodiment of mental suffering in all its reality and severity. Afterwards, when the time of trial was past, and he could look back on it and trace its effects, he frequently remarked, that he believed no other than the severe discipline he then underwent, could have brought a spirit like his to entire self-renunciation. Cant or religious pretence was alike repugnant to his nature, and to his cultivated taste; but in those days of suffering he gained such insight into himself, as led him, pure as his outward life had been, fully to appropriate the strongest expressions, by which the scriptures indicate the sinfulness of human nature. He then recognised in this period of mental conflict and distress, the direct acting of the Spirit of GOD, revealing those things which "the natural man knoweth not." What were

dimly apprehended before, as little more than objects of intellectual belief—the extent of the moral derangement of his own nature, the mystery of personal connexion with the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ—had now become matters of cordial faith. Thus, raised by His power into a full participation of those things, only to be understood by such participation, his became a new existence. The secret spring of daily actions was changed. Never living entirely without the *fear* of God as a *controlling* principle, he now became sensible of *love* to Him as an *impelling* principle, causing him to seek to serve Him to whom he owed so much, and to follow His will in all the pursuits of life.

Having so long tried in vain the various measures prescribed by the best medical advice, both at home, and in different places he visited, Mr. Roby turned as a last resource to the Water Cure. He went to Malvern in the spring of 1847; looking up, as he afterwards said, to those beautiful hills, as he approached them, with the thought “I shall never walk there—I am only coming to die.” Encouragement being given him, to expect ultimate recovery, and finding the process of cure would be very slow, he at once broke up his establishment at Rochdale, and fixed his residence for the time at Malvern. His own medical attendant considered him past hope when he left the north; nor was it in the power of medicine to effect a cure. When he commenced the trial of Hydropathy, Dr. Gully pronounced the sheath of every nerve to be in a state of active inflammation.

Almost every aliment he took increased the irritation; medicine only added fuel to the flame. He pursued the water treatment vigorously for some months, before he perceived any benefit, and to his own indomitable perseverance in following the prescribed directions he owed, under the blessing of GOD, his surprising restoration. A remarkably good constitution, unimpaired by excesses of any kind, gave every advantage to remedial measures in combating disease, and in the end his case proved an instance of the perfect success of those measures.

Distinct as was his mental suffering in its true cause from the physical malady, they aggravated each other, and in recovery their mutual action was observable. Faith and Hope by slow degrees gained strength; the spirit insensibly grew calmer, the SON of GOD was seen walking on the waves, and the tempest was hushed. The burning anxiety within now quenched in the sense of reconciliation with GOD, "My Father" being at last the delighted cry of the spirit; there was no longer a latent impediment to the complete restoration of health.

The first palpable symptom of general improvement, was the gradual return of his love for botany, and pleasure in the pursuit. This was nurtured by his excellent wife, who, with a delight which can only be imagined by those who have watched the returning health of some beloved one, induced him to make a botanical object for their daily drives. The Flora of the neighbourhood contained many rare plants only known

to him, through Sowerby's figures or dried specimens. By degrees, amendment became more decidedly marked, his native flow of spirits began to return, though at first feebly: and she who through those years of suffering — a period almost as painful to the patient's friends as to himself — had nursed him with the tenderest care, and unwearied affection, now realized the sentiment of the poet,

“ Sweet when the winter of disease is past,
And the glad spring of health returns at last,
On a loved cheek long bloomless, to behold
Its first faint leaf the trembling rose unfold.

* * * * *

“ Oh, doubly blest, who then can trusting view
The buoyant step, the vigour-beaming hue;
And love's fond cares recall'd, with joy divine
Can whisper to his heart,—That work is mine!

“ *Lines addressed to Mr. Wedgewood by Dr. Thomas Brown, Late Prof. Mor. Phil. in the Univers. of Edinb.*”

She had her reward — she lived long enough to see the object of her affectionate solicitude restored to health, the powers of mind and body returning in full force, and was then herself prostrated by an illness before which her constitution gave way. She died peacefully and happily, in the faith and hope of the Gospel, just as a new year was opening with all its promise on others. A blow so sudden and unexpected, was bewildering:

the companion of years was gone, the bereaved one was alone, and in new scenes. His efforts at cheerfulness in the society of casual acquaintance, compared with the mastery feeling would gain over him, when he entered into the home society of nearer friends, attested the severity of this new trial. But happily for the mourner, he could recur to the calm and peace of those last moments, they seemed to be to him, the most precious of earthly recollections.

He once more turned to his pen, and sought a healthy solace for his lonely hours in mental occupation, first obtaining leave of his physician, who assured him that the wish to write, intimated he might do so with safety. During the ensuing summer and autumn he gave what leisure the imperative claims of "the cure," permitted, to literary occupation of various kinds. But still *home* was not the same, there was a kind of dislocation in the social life (if the expression may be allowed) he could not write as he was wont to do. He persevered, and as months rolled on regained his usual facility of composition. A tale of considerable length, founded on the characteristics of modern life, occupied him during the winter. Though lacking the romance of the olden time, it was not deficient in stirring incident and spirited dialogue. It appeared in "Hogg's Weekly Instructor," from May to August 1850.

The following lines, composed after he had recommenced writing, are among the few which, bearing a date, allow of insertion in the right place. They are

now garnered among life's precious things, having been addressed to a family group of whom the writer of this sketch was one :

- “ Ye came across my path
 In life's dark lonely way,
 A gleam upon its dreary track,
 A bright but transient ray ;
 Or like some vivid meteor-light,
 Which dazzling, leaves a deeper night !
- “ Or like an evening gleam
 Athwart some stormy sky,
 On rocks, woods, waves the radiance breaks
 In glory and in joy.
 Ere all is wrapt in doubt and gloom,
 And darkness falls o'er daylight's tomb.
- “ Like memories of the past,
 When life's young morn was bright ;
 And all the glowing future, one
 Wide atmosphere of light.
 Ere gathering clouds the skies o'erspread
 And early hope's brief sunshine fled.
- “ 'Twere better ne'er to taste
 Of pleasure's thrilling draught,
 Than the parch'd, fever'd, thirsty lip
 To leave ere it be quaff'd !
 'Twere better launch on Lethe's stream,
 Than bliss to feel a bygone dream.

“To meet,—and meet no more!
One look and then to sever;
To feel 'tis but a parting glance
And then ‘Farewell’ for ever!
As from bright tints deep shades we borrow,
Joys past but deepen present sorrow.

“All earthly joy must fade,
All earthly bliss decay,
Life but the sunshine and the shower
Of some brief “April day:”
Till death like night's grim shadow steals,
And all the unknown at once reveals!

“And earthly idols, all
Must perish if too dear;
We ne'er should seek enduring bliss
Could we but find it here.
Our dearest, tenderest ties must break,
Hopes wither oft, and friends forsake.

“And though your presence now
A vision of the past;
And those bright laughing sunny hours
Too joyous were to last;
Yet like the perfume of the flower
More fragrant in the twilight hour,

“So though unseen,—beheld
In memory's milder light,
More tender and more hallow'd seem
Forms too remote for sight.
In memory's softer hues enshrin'd
What cherish'd hopes are left behind!

“ And though we meet no more,
 Though destined far apart,
 The fond remembrance lingers long
 That lingers in the heart;
 A breath, a touch, the chord may thrill,
 And all the past our bosom fill.

“ Adieu ! whate’er betide
 On life’s unstable sea,
 In darkness or in light the Power
 Unseen your solace be.
 In joy or woe, whate’er His will,
 His hand your guide, your safety still !

“ Great Malvern, May 1848.”

To test Mr. Roby’s power of language in a sportive mood, the first letter and last word in each line of the following acrostic were given him one evening. The order of the rhymes as well as of the initial letters was to remain unchanged. On the following morning he produced the lines completed. The Ivy Rock was a favourite haunt in a ravine on the hills.

“ Malvern the birth-place of English Poetry.

The vision of Pierce Plowman from THE IVY ROCK.”*

* Robert Langland’s Visions of Pierce Plowman, were written about the year 1362. He represents himself as falling asleep on the Malvern Hills, and there beholding a series of visions, in describing which, he takes occasion to satirise the vices prevailing in the different classes of society, particularly the corruptions of the clergy. His prediction of the Reformation in England is most remarkable. As the date of these visions preceded Chaucer twenty

"The minstrel seer look'd out *afar*,
 His eye was keen, his glance was *long*;
 Eve deck'd her brow with one fair *star*
 In glory oft to hear his *song*.
 Visions of after-years bursting to *life*,
 Yon wide plain swept in shadows huge and *dim*
 Records of woe, and dread, and coming *strife*!
 On that lone rock, while mute his evening *hymn*
 Calm silence sate; — and through the live-long *night*
 Kindled his rapt eye in prophetic *light*.

"Malvern, March 21, 1849."

In the summer of 1849, Mr. Roby again married.
 The loved, and almost idolized head of a happy home,
 he appeared, as he had never before to those who only
 knew him in his bereaved life, breathing an atmosphere
 of happiness, and diffusing it around him, till even the
 sorrowful grew bright with smiles, and

"Souls by nature pitch'd too high,
 By suffering plunged too low,"

years, the author must be considered the first English poet. He
 was a native of Shropshire, and fellow of Oriel College. Whitaker,
 who styles him the father of English Poetry, does not confirm the
 supposition that he was a monk of Worcester or Malvern. He
 thus paraphrases the opening lines.

"In early summer while sunshine was mild, I withdrew myself
 into a solitary place, surrounded with shrubs, in habit not like an
 Anchorite who keeps his cell, but like one of those unholy hermits
 who wander about the world to see and hear wonders; and on a
 May morning, reclining in a glade among the Malvern Hills, I
 slept from fatigue, and dreaming, beheld all the wealth and woe of
 the world."—*Whitaker's (of Whalley) Ed. of Pierce Plowman*:
 1813.

were lifted up again into the untroubled joy of childhood. It was impossible the traveller should retain his mantle of grief with such fervid sunshine around him. The enthusiasm of his nature gathered new force from the buoyancy of recovered health, and found its own element in the exquisite woodland scenery lying among the recesses of the Cotswold hills. To those who know these woods, or have once seen them in the tender luxuriance of very early summer, this term is not too strong. The rich botanical treasures they presented, were many of them new to him. The writer cannot forget the intense pleasure with which he discovered among the last year's beech leaves, and held up to view, the beautiful *Epipactis grandiflora* (white helleborine), which he had only once before seen, his companion, never. Nor the delight with which on another occasion he hailed the long-sought *Listera nidus avis* (birds-nest ophrys), now found for the first time in its native habitat. Nor did he lose the general impression of nature in scientific details. The beautiful effects of light and shadow, the peculiar blue air tint of the beech woods, every thing that went to form the perfect whole, seemed individually to fill his spirit with exquisite pleasure. And as, in that evening's wandering through the Cranham woods, with friends whose spirits were kindred — looking down the hanging wood, through a lengthening vista, the evening mist was seen creeping on, its hues changing gradually from soft rose-colour to deep purple, the novel and almost unearthly

beauty of the scene was such, that all caught his rapture, and felt that never before had any thing so vividly imaged the paradise of the spirit-world. It might have been the painter's conception of Bunyan's land of Beulah.

The early autumn of the year was spent among the Cumberland mountains. Furnished with a botanical tin, pressing-book, and sketch-book — the provision for the day slung at the saddle-bow, some delightful excursions of about five-and-twenty miles a day were made. Nothing could be more congenial with his buoyant, independent spirit, than the freedom of these mountain rambles — professional guides dispensed with, he always squire of dames, and horses too. Starting early in the morning, dining one day on the mountain's brow, the next in the recesses of Borrowdale, amid the haunts of the rarer ferns, or under the shadow of Honister Crag, in the silence of the mountain solitudes; and then with the declining sun, treasure-laden, wending our homeward way as the evening shadows crept on, until,

“Every leaf was lost

In the dark hedges,”

and the road lengthened itself out as if interminably, till at last the lights twinkled cheerily as Keswick came in sight.

While thus with youth renewed — for certainly Hydropathy in Mr. Roby's case seemed to effect more than the mere removal of disease — life became one

long holiday of enjoyment, it was also a period of earnest work.

“Like as a star,
That maketh not haste
And taketh not rest,”

he

“Was ever fulfilling
His God-given hest.”

With no claims of a secular profession upon him, and with a spirit chastened and hallowed by suffering, he devoted his energies to literature principally, but at the same time he was prompt to use his powers in any way for the good of his fellow-men. Impressed more deeply than ever with the conviction that in the faith, and practice of Christianity alone, lie the true happiness and virtue of our race; and that in the exercise of his talents, man's only adequate aim is to be found in the service of GOD, he sought by a more constant infusion of Christian principles, in the productions of his pen, to give a corresponding tone to the minds of his readers; thus working

“As ever in his great Task-master's eye.”

Bearing in mind a truth burnt in by affliction, how entirely he owed life and immortality to a Saviour's love, he “loved much” in return, and found in that love, a motive for unsparing labour. During his stay at Keswick, he was placed in circumstances which

called upon him to conduct the worship of a few poor people from Sabbath to Sabbath. That self-distrust which so eminently characterised him before GOD, was immediately roused. The pleasure he had known in swaying large audiences, in striking out from listening countenances the sympathetic flash, recurred to his mind, and he feared, lest in holy things self-seeking should intrude; "I am so afraid of running before I am sent," was the remark made in confidence, where each feeling of the soul was uttered as it rose. But the call was clear and distinct, the voice of "the Master" was heard and obeyed. Sad and strange would it have been if the tongue so eloquent for the gratification of his fellow-men, had been silent when their highest welfare was to be promoted — if that voice raised at man's request for his passing pleasure, had been dumb for God. And doubtless the light of the spirit-world, which even when we only catch it dimly reflected from the mantles of the ascending ones, resolves into

"The baseless fabric of a vision,"

the objects of earthly ambition, has now confirmed the judgment passed by the faithful spirit, whose simple aim while here, was to "*do the will*" of his Father in heaven.

The Religious Tract Society's Monthly Messenger, for September of that year, No 63, was from his pen. It had an extensive circulation, and a slight fact relative to

it, that has recently come to light, is doubly interesting when it is borne in mind, how intensely the writer of the Tract had suffered, and how deep in consequence was his sympathy with all mental distress. A poor woman in the south of England was so weighed down with family troubles, that she came one day to the resolution of ending them that night, by throwing herself into a river which ran hard by her dwelling. Before evening, a gentleman who was not aware of the state of her affairs, put into her hands a copy of the tract referred to. The inquiry with which it was headed, "Are you fit to die?" arrested her attention. She felt she was not fit to die, and her resolution was shaken — she deferred, at least for that night, fulfilling her intention. The conviction of her unfitness for another world deepened; she was led to seek forgiveness and renewal of spirit — she found the way of peace, and the last thing heard of her, was that her worldly circumstances also were prospering. It may be worth observing, that probably the tract had the more point, entered more into the heart of the reader, from the fact of its having been written with an individual strongly before the author's mind. A young woman, whose life was rapidly going in confirmed consumption, while she was utterly unaware of her danger, had excited his deepest interest. Merry, buoyant, well disposed towards every one and every thing, except the subject of religion; her dislike or fixed aversion to which

went beyond all bounds. The tract was written, but before it was published he had lost all traces of her.

Most conspicuous during this journey was his untiring industry combined with the variety of his pursuits, no one of which seemed to interfere with another. The industrious botanist, and equally industrious artist, yet found leisure for careful reading, and the use of the pen. Every moment had its occupation; the rainy days were devoted to literary work or the finishing of sketches, broken by a quiet game of chess. While at Bowness Mr. Roby enjoyed one high gratification, a few details of which, though given in a private letter, may be inserted without apology, as the subject is of general interest.

“ Saturday, Sept. 30th.

“ We have seen Wordsworth to-day. As we accompanied friends of my husband's (the Rev. J. H. and Mrs. Addison, of Birthwaite Abbey) who happened to owe Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth a morning visit, we did not feel intruders. As usual the day was brilliant, we had a delightful row up the lake, the trees on the islands had the rich scarlet and russet tints of autumn, while those on the shore still retained their soft green, making the edges of the lake perfectly verdant. A flight of snow that fell yesterday covered the tops of the mountains which came out in the full sunshine, pure white against the brightest of blue skies. Past the lake, we rowed up the Rotha as far as it is practicable, and there leaving the boats, — cloaks as well — moored to the margin of the stream, we took a beautiful path, through private grounds, on the left of the river, passing Fox How, from whence I bring you an ivy relic, to Rydal Mount. *Mr.* Wordsworth,

(as of course he is here,) was just sitting down to dinner; he came out and begged us to stay in the drawing-room, or in the grounds if we preferred it, till dinner was over. We chose to stroll about, which gave time for a sketch. After a short time, Mr. Wordsworth came and took us into the drawing-room to see Mrs. W. He was not so tall as I had expected, probably the effect of years; his voice somewhat indistinct, gave indications of old age, not so his ideas or expressions. The lower part of his face is deeply furrowed; but when sitting with his back to the light, animated in conversation, every thing is lost in its glowing expression, except his noble expanse of forehead. He chatted away on literary matters with my husband, evidently with hearty pleasure. They talked of a distinguished living writer; of his style, Mr. Wordsworth remarked, that every sentence seemed finished by itself, which was never the case with our best writers—that reviewing had an injurious effect on the style of a literary man, the reviewer has ever to be saying something that will tell, every sentence must be striking.

“Allusion was made to a new neighbour; Wordsworth observed that she was clever, but apt to be imposed on; he confessed that on the whole, he was sorry she had come there, on account of her habit of not going to a place of worship: the example might do no harm in London, Manchester, and those large places, where people did not know their next-door neighbour, but here it was different, and no good she could do would be equal to the harm of her example; ‘but,’ he added, ‘I like her benevolence, and forgive many things for that.’ One other remark he made must not be forgotten; speaking of a writer whom he considered not a safe guide on account of his prejudices, he said, ‘He is so prejudiced he does not know when he lies.’

“Altogether the visit was one of high delight. There was so much more enthusiasm about him, than from the philoso-

phic cast of his poems I had expected. The genial glow of his manner, the warmth of his shake of hands at parting, and especially the quick pleasure with which he turned round to his wife whenever she made a remark, and the affectionate tone in which, when he did not catch it, he would inquire, 'What did you say, Mary'? quite won my heart. He impressed us, too, as a Christian living in obedience to, and communion with Heaven. His personal character seemed to come out with a completeness one would hardly have believed possible in our interview. I shall understand and love all he has written, the better for this visit."

Returning homewards, Mr. Roby made several visits among his family and friends. Little was it thought when one gratification and another were deferred owing to the lateness of the season till the *next* visit, that this was the *last*. The cordiality and pleasure with which he was welcomed, left a delightful recollection of Lancashire and Yorkshire hospitality. The country had not yet lost all its beauty, the rich Autumn tints of October were still lingering on the Bolton Woods: the Wharfe gave forth his peculiar music as he rushed along his rocky bed in the open meadow, or dashed madly over the fearful Strid, till even those accustomed to gaze drew back from the fascination. One day was devoted to York, the metropolis of his native North. His familiarity with the remains of antiquity so pre-eminently abounding in that city, and his enthusiasm equal to his knowledge, rendered him one of the best of Ciceroni. Ever vivid will be the impressions of that day; the grandeur of

the Minster, as the South Front, with its beautiful marygold window comes suddenly into view at the end of the old narrow street; the solemnity which seemed to pervade the very atmosphere within; the seven sisters memorialized in those unique chaste lights which bear their name—and never was the light of Heaven intercepted by aught so soft, so subdued, so meet for a Temple of the Most High, with no distraction from higher thought in its beauty—and the incomparable west windows, where the tracery is so light, and the colouring so gorgeous, that it seems as if the stone work were melting into gems. And how was all that glory heightened as it was reflected back from his spirit, the true home of the beauty which the material can only symbolize.

The Red Tower, the scene of one of his published tales; the site of the Roman Prætorium, the scene of another; the unrivalled Museum gardens, with their Roman and Gothic remains, the Multangular Tower and St. Mary's Abbey, the city walls, &c., &c., all that could be seen in one day, by the help of good walking, and unflagging spirits, contributed to our enjoyment. What could not be brought in, was left for future years, so fondly reckoned on, when a stay of weeks or months in the city was to allow all its recesses to be explored, and the spirit of the place to be thoroughly imbibed. Yet beyond all comparison with the other pleasures of the day, great as they were, was the enjoyment in a manner created by his intense

delight in the present, and in the plans for the future ; — yet of that future “if the Master will,” was ever on his lips. The hour that came “as a thief in the night,” found him watching.

By Christmas, Mr. Roby had settled down at Malvern, and commenced his winter's work. His habit was to devote the first hour or half hour after breakfast, to religious reading, selecting such works as bore on personal or devotional, rather than on theoretic or polemical subjects. Among the last he read, were some new favorites:—Hodge's “Way of Life,” and his “Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans ;” Alleine's “Heaven Opened,” and Sheppard's “Devotional Thoughts.” “Milner's Sermons,” which had long held the highest place in his estimation, were frequently in hand. The rest of the forenoon was given to literary occupation, as were the evenings when not spent in society. The only interruption to this quiet course of life, was the delivery of his Lectures on Botany ; (which had been given two months previously at Northampton,) before the Worcestershire Natural History Society, in January, 1850. This would scarcely be worthy of mention, were it not for a circumstance which arose out of the engagement. While arranging the diagrams preparatory to the delivery of the last lecture, Mr. Roby incautiously stepped too near the back of the platform, which was protected only by a curtain, his left foot slipped, and the right leg was bent back from the knee on which the whole weight of the body was con-

sequently thrown. He had, however, the self-command to go through the lecture without in the least betraying what he suffered, except by the lameness involuntarily shown when he had occasion to move in order to point out the different illustrations; but the agony he endured was intense, and he reached home sick and faint from its long continuance. His power of bearing pain often excited surprise and admiration in those who witnessed it, so complete in his case was the "power of the soul over the body." It was mental, not bodily, anguish that he dreaded. Mr. Roby never quite recovered from the effects of this accident, though, contrary to the expectation of those who were acquainted with the extent of the injury, by the time he left Malvern in June, they were not perceptible in his walk. The muscles, however, had not fully regained their play, the act of kneeling was difficult and painful; mounting gaps and fences in his botanical rambles still more so; he was ever fearful of a stray stone, feeling that a trifle might occasion a fall: and this, it is apprehended, must have increased his peril on the awful morning of the 18th of June.

In spite of pain, he worked hard during the winter and spring. He finished a series of papers, containing a popular introduction to Botany; wrote two reviews, one for the Literary Gazette on Dr. Addison's recent work on Consumption; the other for Hogg's Weekly Instructor, on a work which had just appeared by the author of "Dr. Hookwell," entitled "Dr. Johnson, his

Religious Life and Death." But his principal occupation was the composition of a series of tales, intended to illustrate the influence of Christianity in successive periods. At this he laboured incessantly. The consecration of his talents in any way their nature admitted to the service of HIM whom with George Herbert he delighted to call "My Master," was the mainspring of his untiring energy. And when only once the voice of affection suggested that he was working too hard, he replied, as though with a presentiment of the sudden coming on of night to him, to the effect that he had not long to work, adding, "I must not sit still and see the stream run by." He prepared six of the tales (deferring one for the fourth century till he had received a copy of a work which a friend had promised on the Druidical Worship), thus bringing the series down to the close of the seventh century, when superstitious rites and observances began to overspread Christendom. At the end of the closing tale he glances at the gathering darkness, and thus concludes with the last words he ever wrote for the press:—"In our next we shall trace some of those mysterious dispensations,—inscrutable to us, but doubtless among the 'all things' which work together for good, and 'for the furtherance of his gospel.'" It is not surprising that these words, little noticed when first listened to, on the completion of the story, should, when seen again a few weeks after the sad catastrophe, seem like words of comfort which affection had unconsciously traced against the day of

need. Little more was accomplished besides sketching out future occupation for the pen in old and new directions. An instance of the latter now vividly recurs to mind: seeing Tieck's *Phantasien* one morning on a friend's table, he borrowed it, to ascertain if a translation of the tales would suit a purpose he had in view, and to try how two minds could work together. The experiment was perfectly successful. Very slightly acquainted with the language himself, the tale was read off to him in what English, or sometimes half Germanized English, was at command: the rough-hewn thought was instantly apprehended in all its beauty and meaning by the listener, and given back, in his own polished style, rather "a transfusion than translation." The pleasure was unexpectedly cut short in the midst of a tale, after the second or third evening, and it was with a feeling, even then recognised as akin to foreboding, that the unfinished volume was returned to the friend whose sudden departure from Malvern thus put an end to the delightful occupation.

As the spring advanced, and the effects of the accident were so much diminished as to allow of the free exercise of walking, Mr. Roby renewed his botanical rambles, generally in the society of friends; and very pleasant were these little parties that wound over the hill-top or through the woody lanes and green meadows of Herefordshire, in search of plants to supply his own and his friends' desiderata, or those of the London Botanical Society, of which he was a member. And, quick as was

his eye for rare plants, it caught even more quickly those beautiful effects on the landscape which the changeful skies of spring so often produce, making a perfect picture of an old farmstead a broken foreground, contrasting with the soft retiring distance or the gently swelling slopes, where beneath the trees scarcely yet in leaf the wind flowers bowed as the breeze passed over them.

Perhaps the crowning botanical pleasure of the season was his lighting upon the beautiful *Pinguicula vulgaris* (common Butterwort) in a spongy place on the hill. He seemed the very personification of happiness, as he hastened home, with buoyant step and sparkling eye, to one whose desire to see, equalled his own to show, this pride of our bogs. Often in the preceding autumn at the Lakes had the pale green star-like tuft of leaves called forth eloquent praises of its beauty, and corresponding regrets that the time of its flowering was over for the season. The Lancashire Asphodel was the one other flower which he most regretted not being able to show, as its withered spikes indicated again and again where it had bloomed.

Spring was deepening into summer, when Mr. Roby made arrangements for a journey into Scotland. Furnished, through the kindness of a friend, with introductions to the best society in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, with the prospect of the meeting of the British Association, and the anticipation of renewing mountain rambles, he looked forward to the summer with raised expectations.

In approaching the last few hours the writer feels the alternative lies between making the slightest possible reference to them, or casting herself on the reader's sympathy and indulgence, and using details which were written three years since, with near friends, rather than the public, before her mind. Thrown suddenly into circumstances where the sway of grief was broken by constantly recurring necessity for thought and action, the mind was excited and over-strained to incessant exertion rather than stunned, and under the prolonged excitement, it could go again over scenes which it is now too much a coward to encounter. She, therefore, hopes there is no error in adopting the course now pursued, and embodying the private MS. in the general narrative.

We left Malvern for Egremont June 7th. The ten days passed there were occupied with the interests of the two boys whom their father was anxious to see set out in life. When he came in tired with a long morning spent in Liverpool, after a few moments' rest, he would turn to a sketch that had been in progress during his absence, and, fatigue all vanishing, would call for pencil and colours, take his seat at the window, and go on with the drawing. It was a great favourite of his. Of all the pleasures with which life was replete, none delighted him more than this, both working on the same picture, without betraying by any want of unity in the design or harmony in the colouring, that two minds had been engaged. *That drawing alas!*

which he fondly called "the best yet," lies in the ill-fated wreck.

Pleasant, and yet painful, are the memoirs of evening rambles along the beach watching the vessels as they came and went. One elegant yacht, which his artist eye detected among the numerous craft, is well remembered: he fixed her form in his mind, and destined her for "the drawing"—one of the many unfulfilled purposes.

The last sabbath came, and it was a day of peace. We worshipped GOD together; that hymn of Dr. Watts', so great a favourite of his from its touching contrasts, —

"Give me the wings of Faith to rise," &c.

opened the last service. As we walked home in the evening we felt mentally invigorated: he seemed more than ever penetrated with a sense of consecration to the service of GOD, and we communed of how, in our coming sojourn amid new scenes, He might best be served. "He will make it plain, He will point out our work for us," was my beloved husband's closing remark.

At three o'clock p. m. on Monday 17th June we embarked on board the steamer Orion for Scotland, hoping to reach Glasgow by ten, and Edinburgh by one o'clock the next day. Nothing could be calmer than the sea, and we walked for hours on the deck, watching any vessel that came in sight, and catching at intervals distant glimpses of the coast. Our favourite spot was a narrow ledge at the stern immediately behind the wheel. It just gave us footing, and enabled us to look over and watch the track left by the vessel as she cut

rapidly through the waves. The white foam, the various shades of pale green, darkening as we seemed to look down into the depths of the ocean, recalled descriptions of the glaciers, and the correctness of the supposed resemblance my husband confirmed from his own recollections.

Evening wore on—we took our last meal together on deck. The Isle of Man came in sight; a sketch was taken for his approbation; and the bright smile that rewarded it is sunshine even now. All recollections of him are happy: the animation and hope with which he repeatedly expressed his belief that his daughter's health, which was not firm, would be completely established by the voyage; the quiet satisfaction of his manner as we sat enjoying the present, sometimes glancing forward to the morrow, all bespoke happiness. Indeed, all the characteristics of a happy life seemed to meet in those few hours. There was the earnestness and the tenderness of affection: there was, too, its playfulness. There was the thought of still holier things: strong was the wish he expressed that we could have been at the lowly meeting for prayer, which was announced the night before for that evening. There was the love and admiration of nature, as the glories of sunset deepened behind the Manx mountains, and from his post of observation he again and again, in his own earnest and animated manner, called me to his side.

Chess—that recreation which seemed ever to have the effect on his mind which exercise out of doors has on the

jaded frame—was then resorted to; and having found an antagonist, he went down into the saloon for a game. As we were passing the light-house at the northern extremity of the Isle of Man, which he had expressed a great wish to see, I called him up. After watching it for a minute he went down again, remarking the game would soon be finished.

In order that neither lady should be left alone, particularly as one was in delicate health, it was arranged that he should take a berth in the gentlemen's cabin, and his daughter and I have a small cabin to ourselves, our cabin and his being as near as possible.

The last lady who remained above besides myself was the niece of Dr. Burns. We had very agreeable conversation. She had taken the trip many times, and I anticipated the pleasure my husband would have, when we met at the breakfast-table in the morning, in making so pleasant and intelligent an acquaintance.

When we parted for the night, between eleven and twelve o'clock, I went down into the saloon to make a few arrangements for the morning, and, half afraid lest a sudden diversion of his ideas should lose my husband the honour of victory, was just beginning some little apology for the interruption, when he looked up with a smile, that said, "you are no interruption," and replied "I am coming directly." I returned on deck only for a short time, when, thinking it better to retire, and finding beds were making up in the saloon for the night, I called the steward and committed his dressing case to

his keeping. Oh, that I had waited ! but had I, I should have lost that blessed promise of speedy re-union as the last words I ever heard from him.

My husband had more than once said to me, " Do not undress," and to that, under the providence of God, I believe Lilla and I owed our safety. I fell asleep about twelve o'clock. When the shock came, and the working of the engines, which even in one's sleep was heard, suddenly ceased, we were instantly aroused ; and, looking at my watch to see the hour, in order to have some known fact by which to collect oneself, I found it was a quarter past one a.m. I jumped down from the berth, and, after hastily swallowing a little brandy and water that happened to be in the cabin, to check the sudden sick feeling of fright, put on bonnet and cloak, and went on deck to learn what was the matter, first calling at my husband's cabin door to see if he were there. The gentlemen assured me he was up and gone, and knowing, as I did, his intention of not undressing, and his quick habit of movement, I was satisfied that I should find him on deck. He was not there, at least not on the after-deck, where we had been together. All hands had evidently rushed to the fore-part of the vessel, whence the alarm came, and doubtless he had gone there at once, to ascertain what was the matter before he alarmed us. Persons on deck said we were too near land, had run a-ground, but should be off presently. The light at the harbour was distinctly seen rather behind us, to our right ; as was the high ground

above Port Patrick, apparently a very little distance off; while the fog concealed the promontory right a-head of us, against which we must have dashed in a few moments, had we not struck at the time we did. I went down again to tell Lilla that they said there was no danger, but at the same time assisted her to throw a few things hastily on, and then went on deck. In the meantime my husband had not come to us. I went to his cabin door again, to ask if he were there; but the inmates were in such confusion they could give me no answer. Returning up the gang-way again, I met the steward, and stood some minutes under the lamp, while he looked down his way-bill, to ascertain that I was right in my husband's number. He assured me that we should get off. On deck once again, I perceived that the vessel inclined much more, that the fore-part had sunk considerably: the noise and confusion were all there. The after-deck was comparatively free from persons; a few, indeed, were trying to lower one of the boats. We walked about, looking for my husband, who was, I have now no doubt, entangled among the crowd of persons in the fore-part, where most of the two hundred on board had run. He must have been almost the first on deck; others rushed after him in that direction: a rope—the slightest thing catching the weak leg—would throw him down, and, with the noise and confusion, which at any time would have been bewildering, it must have been impossible for him to disentangle himself. What hindered me from running down into the crowd to

look for him, I know not, unless it were the persuasion that he would instinctively come to the spot where we had been together, as I had done; the expectation each moment that he would come seemed to fill my mind: it never once occurred to me that he might be in greater danger than ourselves. Only the conviction that the will of God was done can prevent the mind from agonizing longings for that night to come over again, were it a thousand times, for the merest chance of trying to save him.

The vessel was perceptibly going down in the forepart, when the captain jumped on the skylight, and assured the passengers that if they could remain in the vessel they would be saved. This seemed probable, as the shore boats were seen in the twilight putting towards us; but, alas! we were now too rapidly sinking to allow of their near approach. The vessel lurched gradually towards the shore. We had placed ourselves on the part which, from the position of the ship, would be longest above water, with the foot resting on the ledge, where we had so happily stood in the afternoon. It enabled us to grasp a rope which came down from the mizen-mast to the edge of the vessel, and there awaited her going down, which I now saw was inevitable. We felt the power of God could save us, if such were His will, or His mercy receive us to Himself: it was not a new thing to approach Him, or to resign ourselves into His hands; it was no strange God, but our long-loved Father in Heaven, before whom we

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were about to appear. So we rested with calm confidence on that most blessed assurance, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," and committed ourselves to our Saviour's hands.

In a few minutes, a sudden hissing excited fears of an explosion, and we sank immediately, the hot water rushing up to us as we went down. Rising again, before my head was above water, I felt something at the back of my hand: I instinctively grasped it—it was a rope. A moment after I was on the surface. I exchanged the rope for a spar, and turning round my head to ask for Lilla, found, to my inexpressible joy, she was close behind me, just as we had sunk. This cheered us both with hope of eventual safety. But where was one far dearer? I grasped with my left hand one of those fenders made of netted cords, which are used to prevent ships coming into too close contact with each other, or with the harbour; but it was hard work to keep up. We encouraged each other, and, recollecting that the human body is lighter than the same bulk of water, we tried to float; but this was no easy matter. The number of persons struggling in the water agitated it, and in the endeavour to keep it out of the ears by raising the head, the equilibrium was disturbed, and the feet sank, and with that the dread of going down again came. By the stopping of my watch at half-past one, it afterwards appeared that a quarter of an hour elapsed between the striking of the vessel and her going down, and probably nearly as long passed between our rising

and our being picked up by the shore boats. It was a work of some difficulty and time, when they came up, to extricate us from the ropes: our benumbed limbs and weakened frames rendered us incapable of making any effort ourselves. "Never mind, you are come among Christian people," was the boatman's exclamation, when he had taken me into the boat, and never was truer word spoken. The heart-felt sympathy and substantial kindness we received from all classes could not have been exceeded, and can hardly be imagined. It is impossible to speak too strongly of the goodness and care of kind Mrs. Hannay, who first received us, and whose husband formed and superintended the admirable arrangements by which so many were saved. Placed in bed, and hot cordials being administered, the warmth gradually returned to our benumbed limbs, and we felt *we* were restored to life. Dear Lilla began to indulge hope that her papa was saved too; but I felt he was with GOD, he was so spiritually near; and when the ring he usually wore was brought me, the agony of that moment only confirmed what I knew too well before. Even the catastrophe, fearful as it was, could scarcely be called unexpected; I felt that what I had been looking for had come, for we had both felt we were too happy for this world. He had himself often exclaimed "how will all this end? it cannot last." It was a mournful but a blessed thing to gaze again on that beloved face, with all the glow of health upon it, and more than a placid, a bright smile—but to part from it

thus! Even yet I cannot associate death in the ordinary sense with it.

The first words of comfort, when we knew the extent of our loss, were from the Rev. A. Urquhart and his sister; and precious were their sympathy and manifold kindness. The most deeply grateful feelings will ever be associated with the thought of the Rev. S. Balmer, in whose hospitable manse we remained for many days, while Mrs. Balmer nursed us as a sister. There was another bond between us, besides that of our common humanity,—that of Christianity. We felt that we were not with strangers, but with friends who shared every feeling, that we were all looking from the same point of view, and recognising the same hand. There were personal links too—fellow-sufferers came in to whom my beloved husband's works were known. On the shelves of the manse library were those of my own venerable relative, the late Dr. Ryland, of Bristol; and Lilla found that her mamma's brother-in-law, the late Rev. J. Ely, of Leeds, had been known to our host. Trifling as such things were, they brought a feeling akin to comfort. There is a gratification in mentioning the names of friends to whom so much is owing, and it would be ungrateful not to add that of Mr. and Mrs. Hunter Blair of Dunskaie, whose proffered kindnesses were more than the desirableness of remaining near the shore would allow us to accept.* Truly were we "*an*

* To strangers as well as residents we were much indebted. We received both the warmest sympathy and personal kindness from

hungered, and ye gave us meat; we were thirsty, and ye gave us drink, we were strangers, and ye took us in; naked, and ye clothed us; we were sick, and ye visited us." Be the blessing of "those that were ready to perish" upon them.

For no kindness is gratitude so deeply felt as for that which aided the heart's cherished wish to have those remains, so loved and so precious, removed from beside that ever moaning sea, where they could never have been thought of, without all the horrors of that scene recurring too. To his own family grave, in the burial-ground of the Independent Chapel, Rochdale, they were borne on Saturday the 22d; followed by members of his family, and about forty gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood, who thus spontaneously expressed their sense of his loss. *There* now rests "all that could die" of the man of high intellect, of the loved and honoured, the loving and confiding husband.

the Rev. J. Clarke, Incumbent of Stretford near Manchester, whose interesting narrative, published under the title of "*The Wreck of the Orion*," contains a full account of the mournful catastrophe. And never can be erased from memory the debt of kindness due to an English clergyman of the Episcopal Church in Scotland — the Rev.—Pugh—who had come to seek his lovely little girl who had just perished in the wreck. The sympathy and encouragement he afforded touching that one supreme desire, and his offer, beyond all price, to take charge of the remains so unutterably dear, with those of his own beloved child, fill the heart with a weight of thankfulness that cannot be expressed. I can only look forward to that world where all the lovely will be gathered together, and the tears wiped from the mourner's eyes, as they already have been from those of the beloved ones we weep over.

Farewell! a brief farewell! nay, no farewell to *thee*—*thou* art not severed from us. Spirit as thou art, thou still comest to live and blend with ours in the dim twilight, and when the hum of the world is busy around us. And when we bow in prayer to the Father of Spirits, we feel that we are come not only to “Jesus the Mediator,” but to “the spirits of just men made perfect,” and we worship together in company. Farewell, then, only thou beloved form, whose radiant smile seemed to tell there had been no gathering of the darkness of death, only a stepping from mortal into immortal LIFE; and farewell, even to thee, only for a season, for we know that “them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” We shall yet see thee again, and dwell with thee in eternal re-union, in a world where the very memory of thy loss shall have vanished, for “there shall be no more sea.” .

The foregoing brief sketch, little more than the enumeration of ordinary events and literary pursuits, would alone convey a very inadequate idea of one whose character was peculiarly his own. One of the many definitions by which it has been attempted to analyse the subtle nature of genius is “the power of interpreting nature.” In the case of Mr. Roby, it took the form of art, and he laboured in her train, whether with pen or pencil, rather than in the service of science. Looking over the face of nature, he would catch her

slightest hints, and transfer to his paper—not just what met the ordinary gaze, but — a picture. As if nature by her scattered rocks and wandering clouds, gave him in rude symbolic language, her thought of beauty, and as he with initiated eye, read the meaning, there presently grew under his pencil the full interpretation, a silent poem, which every passer by might more or less comprehend, and enjoy.

And were it the *voice* of nature that met his ear, that voice whose floating music so few perceive, it had as ready an interpreter. When in the social circle, or in the busy street, the inner sense caught the inarticulate sounds, he would note them down, and present to others the melody which had charmed himself.

And eloquently would nature speak to him of truths pertaining to humanity ; felicitously were they apprehended and expressed, he lingering meanwhile till she had taught all her meaning.

“ How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank ! ”

said Shakespeare. The conception of a similar scene, and, no doubt, the unrecognised remembrance of this line, suggested,

“ How calm on yonder stream the moonlight sleeps.”

There a copyist would have stopped, but *he* was in close communion with nature, listened himself to her teachings, and learned more.

" How calm on yonder stream the moonlight sleeps,
 " Fair image woman of thy maiden breast
 " Unmoved by love. Anon some vagrant breath
 " Ruffles its surface, and its pure still light
 " In tremulous pulses heaves ; — brighter, perchance,
 " The feverish glitter, but its rest is o'er ! "

Duke of Mantua.

The descriptions of nature in his writings are part of this ministry of interpretation. All see, but who, beside the gifted, can either by pen or pencil

" stay
 " Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape,"
 permitting not

" the thin smoke to escape,
 " Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day."

WORDSWORTH'S *Sonnets*.

Our great Maker gives to some men general excellence of parts, so as to secure success in whatever pursuit they follow ; others are more exquisitely moulded, and receive from His hand that peculiar and indestructible form of genius, which no external circumstances can affect. It was that general superiority of abilities, which would alone have secured Mr. Roby eminence in any walk of life he had chosen ; but the mechanical routine of monetary transactions could not prevent the artist's eye from guiding his pencil, render the ear deaf to the latent melody, or hinder for a moment the genius stamped as creative by its Maker from peopling the old ruins of the Past with living

forms of beauty or of terror. Education could no more train mere excellence of parts to this, than any process of progressive development raise the lower orders of creation into the higher.

Combined with the poetic fancy was a character of high moral tone, a disposition, generous, open-hearted, and impetuous, sensitive, and confiding; irresistibly drawn towards the supernatural, yet as prone to humour. That fine purity of feeling which marked his writings, was equally a personal quality. His sense of honour was quick, as his standard was high. Naturally he would have preferred death itself to the slightest shade of dishonour on his name. Faithful to the command implied in the inspired delineation of the upright man, it might be taken for the description of his own course, — “he that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not.” Incapable himself of mean or sordid action, he never anticipated it in others; unselfish to a degree, he perhaps calculated too much on the same generosity of feeling in the world. The editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in a notice, which appeared in October 1850, alludes to “his well-known liberality to literary men,” a reference amply confirmed by other incidental testimony; but though literary acquaintances were often the topic of home conversation, he never spoke of any kindness it had been in his power to show them. It was the highest luxury he knew, thus to mitigate the perplexities or wants of others, but it was only by accident that his family would discover it.

Even when he dropped money into a poor man's hand, he would hurry away as if he had done something wrong, and wanted to forget it.

Another phase of the same disposition, was the generous pleasure with which he regarded the gifts or acquirements of others. Most cordially did he recognise talent of any kind, no matter in whom, or under what form it appeared. He was as free from envious or jealous feeling as from common selfishness. This arose from a fine nature, — which embraced as kindred spirits those from whom morbid self-love might have shrunk as rivals — not from an overweening or even just sense of his own superiority: in that he was unusually deficient.

In truth his want of self-valuation, almost of appreciation of his own powers, was very noticeable. He would exercise his talents, as a bird does its power of song, for very pleasure, but without any thought of display. "I know," he would say, "that many others cannot do the things I do, but I do not feel as if I had done anything worth thinking of, it falls so far below the point I wish to reach." His delight in giving pleasure supplied this want of the Phrenologist's *Self-esteem*, as regarded others, but to himself, the lack of it, joined to his extremely sensitive disposition, was in fact a destitution of defensive armour; hence it was in the power of minds far inferior to his own to torture him. A similar deficiency was the absence of that worldly wisdom, which in combination with a fine and generous

disposition, is so valuable to its possessors. The deprivation of it occasioned a transparent simplicity of character, which again left him too often at the mercy of coarse ungenerous natures.

That intense yearning for sympathy, which was noticed as a characteristic of his childhood, followed him through life, and seemed to increase with his years. His many resources, though capable of yielding the purest pleasure, could not fill the void. They concealed the longing from observers, but left the heart often aching. Frank and confiding himself, he looked for the same frankness in others. The slightest reserve chilled and wounded him, and threw him back on himself. "An unkind word or look," he would frequently say, "nay a chilling one, from those I respect and esteem, is misery to me." His happiness was indeed a delicate thing, for though the writer can say she never knew any one made happy with so little effort — the very *wish* to make him so, evinced, was enough — yet she often felt, and trembled to feel, how intensely miserable it was in the power of any one he loved, to make him.

His natural vivacity concealed another feature of his character from the general eye, which was yet discernible by those who studied him. "Spare me," said he one day to a lady, half jocosely, "I am so shy." "You shy!" she exclaimed, protesting against the possibility of such a thing. He quietly acquiesced, and let it pass. "You would not think that I was naturally shy," said he a few days after to a friend who had been

present, with whom he was now engaged in a pleasant little disquisition on psychology, and who, he afterwards allowed, knew more of his real character from a few months' acquaintance than any one had done before. "Yes I should," was her unhesitating reply. "Why, how should you think so!" he exclaimed in astonishment. "Your attitudes and movements betray it. I do not say as Robert Hall did of an acquaintance, that you seem begging pardon of all men for being in existence, but you do often seem begging pardon of your company for being in their presence, when they are only too happy to have your society. You would creep into a nutshell, rather than be where you thought you were not wanted."

Not an uncommon, but a pleasing trait, was that humanity to the animal creation which marked him from boyhood. Not only did he never "heedlessly" set "foot upon a worm," but he would carefully remove it from the path, lest some other foot should crush it. Cruelty of any kind called forth his strongest reprehension.

One great charm of his character, was its perfect retention of the freshness of youth. The most juvenile in the company could not but feel that he was as young in spirit as themselves. His regular and temperate habits of life no doubt contributed to this, as did his love of simple pleasures. He never sought the false excitement of artificial stimulants. His own buoyancy of spirits, and ever-varied pursuits, most of all perhaps the exhilaration of botanical "field sports," were the true

stimulants which fed the flame of life, while they made it burn more brightly. Even in those years when the smile or quick repartee often only concealed, but could not remove, the secret care or the unsatisfied craving for some undefined blessing, that preyed within, the change to a new pursuit, or a fresh path for thought and energy, were the only means to which he had recourse "to keep the mind from preying on itself."

To those who knew him best it is easy to trace much of his personal character in his writings. His social disposition, and particularly this freshness of spirit, gave a tone to all he wrote. The high ideal of woman maintained in the "Traditions," has been already noticed: he was quick to perceive fragmentary indications of that ideal, in real life. True to Haydon's motto which he so often quoted, "Ex pede Hercules," one trait of disinterestedness, of self-sacrifice, of intuitive perception of the good, was sufficient, and his imagination therefrom created,

"A perfect woman, nobly plann'd."

A nice observer of the indications of character, he detected, with a quickness approaching to intuition, those little peculiarities of manner and expression which intimate the disposition and habit of thought, and often after a very brief acquaintance, he would by a few touches draw a mental portrait to the life, yet without the slightest approach to caricature, which he would have abhorred as deformity. This habit of close observation

and quick perception contributed to the variety and individuality of his delineations. He was remarkably susceptible of impressions, hence he was open to influences which others escape. A very displeasing expression of countenance would act upon him so strongly, that he would go far out of his way to avoid it. In a similar manner, certain appearances of the clouds in an electrical state of the atmosphere would from childhood impress him painfully, even at times with a sentiment almost akin to horror; and this in spite of a constitution, over which the state of the weather ordinarily had no power; the spirit seemed directly operated on through the eye.

One of his strongest natural tendencies, which had considerable influence in the creations of his fancy, was a love of the supernatural. Nothing contented him till he had traced it up to that subtle point where spiritual relations begin. "Why should such a thing affect us thus?" was the question which he delighted to ask himself. To his mind, as indeed to all thoughtful ones, the mysterious was the element into which all the phenomena of life resolved themselves. And there he took his stand, watching before the veil, if perchance some hand from within would lift its folds. The mutual relations of mind and matter, the secret sympathies of spirit, and the extent of its independence of sense, were chosen topics of thought. The enlarged views of these subjects which modern science is opening before us, at once indicating the direction of future inquiry, and

retrospectively interpreting the wildest records of the past, thus resolving romance into reality, had especial charm for him. The reverse of credulous, he would subject a fact to close investigation, before he gave it credence, but at the same time a latent affinity with the supernatural, if the expression be allowed, drew him to it: hence astrology attracted him, but after close study, he gave it up for various reasons, principally that a kind of Christian instinct, which will often advance when the understanding stops short, warned him off, by a sentiment of approaching forbidden ground.

Mr. Roby was a striking instance of how far literary pursuits may be followed without neglect of the duties of life. "Literature to a man who must have a profession" observes Sir Walter Scott, "should be the recreation not the serious business of life." Mr. Roby's success in his profession was such as to lead another banker of eminence—not prejudiced by the tie of private friendship—to term him the first accountant in Europe. Bearing in mind the pursuits of him of whom the remark was made, it proves that a successful career as an author, is not incompatible with eminence in the ordinary business of life. A strength of moral purpose, which would not allow pleasant occupation to infringe on the prior claims of duty, and which led him inflexibly to follow the course he had laid down as right, gave force to a character that else might have been deemed too brilliant for every-day wear.

One remarkable endowment that must have contributed to his success in his own walk in life, was a power he possessed of determining the amount of any sum of figures that might be laid before him. The friend an extract from whose letter was given on p. 41, thus alludes to this faculty. "If a double column, twenty figures in each row, or a cube of six, arranged as below, were placed before him, he would tell the sum as soon as his eye could read the figures.

1	2	5	4	9	1
5	3	9	8	1	9
6	9	1	2	2	9
7	8	2	7	9	2
3	7	4	7	8	4
4	6	3	6	1	3

He arrived at the result without going through the ordinary process; he saw it at a glance. If, as was rarely the case, owing to a passing fit of dulness, or a momentary distraction of thought, he failed to see the sum at once, he was rather slow than otherwise in doing it by the ordinary mode. Mr. Roby himself told me, that Bidder, perhaps the most wonderful calculator this country ever produced, though his superior in some points, could not approach him here."

Their respective powers must have been the result of two different faculties. In "the calculating boy," it was extraordinary rapidity of *calculation*. In Mr. Roby

it was not calculation at all, but *combination*. He read and combined the figures into a whole, as we should read the word COMPARISON, for instance, without spelling it; the power of the figures in the one case, being equivalent to that of the letters in the other. Perhaps the extraordinary strength and activity of his perceptive faculties, combined with considerable talent for the science of number, may account for it: the rapidity of his perceptions was at all times marvellous. He had not trained himself to this exercise, nor was it a faculty at all improved by use. He found out accidentally one day that he possessed it, and it never varied afterwards. The writer is not aware that he practised to any extent what is termed mental arithmetic. Yet some extraordinary calculations he made with a pack of cards, by a process carried on in his mind, which, if put on paper would have covered many sheets, appears to have been of that nature. In all such matters which depended on numerical arrangement, he was quite *au fait*. On one occasion he saw a lady perform a trick called Sir Isaac Newton's. She declined showing how it was done, and avowed herself unacquainted with the principle on which the arrangement was founded. He went home, lay for hours awake during the night, worked all the cards in the pack over and over again mentally; before morning he had not only discovered the arrangement, but extended the principle so as to be applicable, not to twenty-seven cards only, but to any number within the fifty-two.

Punctuality was another marked feature of Mr. Roby's character. He was, to use his own phrase, "a timist." An amusing instance of this occurs in his tour. "Whilst resting and enjoying our cheer (at the Hospice Tête Noir) I surprised Urlaub the courier, by telling him I had fixed three or four months previously to cross the Tête Noir on this very day, and on this very hour, showing him a sketch of my tour as given in the introductory chapter. He said it would serve him to tell and boast about all his life, he could not have thought it possible; 'but,' continued he with great simplicity, 'I am sure they cannot believe me!'" Other instances equally diverting he would tell, till even punctuality itself lost its sober character, and became tinged with mirth, if not romance.

His love of order and arrangement was very great: it almost amounted to a passion. As soon as a botanical or conchological work came into his hands, he made himself master of its contents, and drew out a tabular view of the information it afforded, a mode of arranging knowledge of which he was particularly fond, enriching the book with what might be wanting, and with references to other standard works. To those who are commencing such pursuits, a little more detail may perhaps afford some useful hints. In Lee's botany of the Malvern Hills, are added, in a beautifully distinct small hand, to each plant named, a reference to the page of Hooker's British Flora, on which it is described, and the month of flowering; while on blank leaves inserted

at the end for the purpose, a list is given of all the plants according to the time at which they flower, thus forming a flora for each month in that district, to guide his search in each day's ramble. In his copies of Sowerby's English Botany and Hooker's Flora, respectively, to each plant the page on which it is to be found in the other work, its number in the London Catalogue, and synonymes from either of these or from any other high authority are added, with a mark against each successive specimen added to his own herbarium. His mode of laying down and preserving specimens for a progressive collection of British plants, often excited the admiration of other collectors. His cabinet of shells, too, was arranged in his own perfect manner. Yet with all this order there was nothing merely mechanical in his character, nothing that hindered the free play of his imagination.

The medical profession had at one period been contemplated for him, and his studies for a short time lay in that direction. For physiological investigations he always entertained a decided partiality. Hence no doubt his ready appreciation of the general principles of hydropathy; he saw and approved the rationale of the system, before he so successfully tested its practice. He had cultivated that general knowledge of the physical sciences which enabled him to trace their mutual relations. He dwelt with peculiar delight on their points of intersection, where the mysterious connection which is ever running underground, as it were,

throughout nature, rises to the surface. His industry and perseverance equalled the activity of his mind, and the versatility of his talents. Concentrating his attention on one subject for the time, when he left it he would turn with the same fixed concentration to another; and the ease with which he resumed any design or train of thought, however long it had been laid aside, prevented his losing ground that had once been gained. The quickness with which he acquired knowledge was remarkable; while the use he would make of a new discovery or of fresh light cast on an old subject, by way of illustration, by elucidating kindred truths in other sciences, or by indicating discoveries yet to be made, was most happy. Nothing seemed lost upon him: a fact became to him something more than a bare fact, an index of the ideal, or of the hidden paths to those mysterious relations of nature, which it has been observed were such favourite objects of contemplation. By no means what is termed a great reader, he usually preferred scientific works to those of general literature. He seemed not to care to follow the imaginations of others; he rather required facts as material for his own to revel in, and create from. Genius must touch the earth to gather strength for her flights.

His love of the fine arts partook of the enthusiasm of his nature. His taste was highly cultivated, and his own proficiency in several branches of art, of no mean order. He loved to dwell on the subtle and mysterious meanings of music, on its wondrous suggestive power,

and its burden of associations. A few specimens of his own power of creating "concord of sweet sounds," have been preserved. He was particularly happy in adapting the music to the words or *vice versâ*. Sometimes he would compose an air to one of his own songs. Very few of these compositions have had the care bestowed on them necessary to prepare them for publication. One which was harmonised by Mr. Novello, and published in the Congregational and Chorister's Psalm and Hymn Book, will appear in the present volume. It is a fair specimen of the composer's power of expressing the higher feelings.

His facility of versification one may almost be tempted to regret. He would have written better, and perhaps oftener, had he gone to it as a more severe task—yet there are some lines of such exquisite music and sentiment, the inspiration of the moment, in his occasional pieces, which no gathering up of his powers could have enabled him to reach. The ballads in the traditions afford illustrations of this remark.

Mr. Roby's skill as a draughtsman was often the admiration of his friends. His landscape drawings from nature even when they are faithful as portraits are always *pictures*. His fondness for investigation, the "Inquisitive wants to know" of childhood aided him here. He was never satisfied until he had found out the reason why an object takes a known appearance under given circumstances, or why certain

processes or touches, transfer certain effects. The writer recollects his mentioning a conversation with the late B. R. Haydon in which the point under discussion was, why when an object is presented against the sky, for example the belly of a horse standing on an eminence, the sky where it approaches the object, though in point of fact as blue there as in any other part, should not be so represented, but in a dim grey, almost neutral tint. (The reader will at once perceive, that the blue sky and black horse would be a tea-tray painting.) The discussion terminated without any satisfactory result, but Mr. Roby could not rest till he had found the true reason in the simple fact, that the eye suiting its focus to the distance of the object to which it is directed, *can not distinctly see, at the same time, objects at different distances.* When the focus was right for the horse, it would only perceive the sky indistinctly, or directed to the sky, the retina would not receive so distinct an image of the horse. Hence if both were represented exactly as they are in themselves, instead of as they are seen in combination, a harsh, unnatural, and therefore false picture would be the result.

His conversation on art was rich in such remarks. A lady who drew in water colours from nature in a superior style observed to the writer, that she had gained more valuable information from Mr. Roby than from any of the best masters of whom she had been in the habit of taking lessons: he had put her

into possession of *principles*. Another friend, who was in raptures with Ruskin's "Modern Painters," described it as "like hearing Mr. Roby talk." And here again, in art as in science, he delighted to seek out those general principles, which, common to all, constitute the oneness of Art, and to trace their relation to the human mind.

To his ardent admiration of nature reference has already been made. That term but partially conveys an idea of his quick and vivid perception of beauty under whatever form it appeared, and of the intense pleasure, one might almost say happiness, of which he was susceptible from it. His spirit seemed to feed upon it as Schiller's Pegasus on the breath of flowers. He would stand entranced before a beautiful object or hang over it as if by some spell he could draw its beauty into his own soul. It seemed as though for pleasure or suffering his mind was in close contact with the *spirit* of outward things. Nor was this high gratification, a thing of rare occurrence. One of Hogarth's lines of Beauty, so abundantly scattered through his world who has eyes to see them, sufficed. He possessed too in a high degree the power of imparting to others the pleasure he thus enjoyed. His enthusiasm caught by sympathy communicated in part to his companions the vividness of his own impressions. A friend, herself most highly gifted, in writing of him says, "What true pleasure I feel in recalling the beauties and excellencies of his character,

in tracing through all his gifts, the upward tendency of his mind which ever looked

‘From Nature up to Nature’s GOD,’

which sought His glory in all the pursuits of science — not *earthly* but *heavenly* pursuits to him — a mind to which was not denied the power to gaze along any one of those shining paths, which unite our mortal with our immortal nature, to which music, and poetry, and art and science opened their divinest treasures, fitting his nature for the immortal joys they whisper of here ! ”

It has been occasionally regretted that his powers were directed to so many objects instead of being concentrated, so as to secure higher excellence in one department. And truly were this short life all man’s existence, the end of his progress, and “earthly immortality” the only “life beyond this,” then it might be to be deplored, if aught would be worth deploring. But regret vanishes when we consider that in this case there were only so many more starting points, for the soul in her higher state of existence, already made out in this life.

Talents so versatile, it may be believed rendered their possessor the ornament of general society. They were at the same time combined with exterior advantages, graceful movement resulting from a well-proportioned and finely-moulded form, elegant manner, so much vivacity, and withal so much gentleness — the

graceful courtesies of life well became him. His conversational powers were seldom equalled. He had always the right word at command whatever might be the topic, while the ever-varying tones of his musical voice lent additional force to every sentiment whether mirthful or pathetic. Information, anecdote, humour were by turns elicited. It was easy, as it was pleasant, to converse with him; he never misapprehended; he seemed to know what others were going to say, their ideas were his, and the prompt rejoinder made, by a kind of social electricity. Conversation never flagged when he was present; a sullen silence was his abhorrence; equally so, a monotonous abuse of the weather, roads, &c. His never-failing humour, and love of pleasantry or kind-hearted banter, supplied the place of Rousseau's expedient of weaving lace-strings, when in company where it was difficult, if not impossible to maintain conversation that would interest the whole party. If occasionally his repartees gave offence, no one was more ready to apologise or to atone to any feeling that had been wounded. In truth, nothing was farther from his intention than giving pain, but his love of humour once excited, he did not pause to look from another's point of view. It was as impossible for him to refrain from enjoying a joke if it told against himself, as if it bore on another — in fact, if it were really a good one, the being pointed against himself seemed rather to enhance the piquancy. So conscious was he of the absence of any

ill-natured feeling, that it was difficult for him to realize how any one could be hurt by those sallies which, coming from another, he would perfectly understand. A lady who was often the subject of his sportive raileries, observed, that no one who saw the kind expression of his eye could feel wounded. It was after a time of close mental application that his sportive qualities came out the most strongly; it seemed to be a necessary relief, and the rebound involved mirthfulness in many of its innocent forms. Practical jokes he never allowed either in himself or others; nor did his humour ever degenerate into mimicry, or amusement at the expense of the absent; delicacy of feeling forbad that. A sharp contest of wits such as he designated "cut and come again" was his great delight. D'Israeli the elder remarks, "One peculiar trait in the conversation of men of genius which has often injured them, when the listeners were not intimately acquainted with the man, are certain sports of a vacant mind, a sudden impulse to throw out opinions and take views of things in some humour of the moment." Something akin to this Mr. Roby occasionally indulged in, if he perceived that any one had formed a false idea of his character, which was not unfrequently the case, he would find a passing diversion in helping on the mistake. How this comported with that yearning for sympathy, which was one of the master passions of his nature, it is not difficult to explain. Finding out by intuition

where he was not understood, he sought in the amusement of watching the effect of the character thus thrust upon him, on those who had given it, a refuge from the pain which the discovery of the utter absence of sympathy could not but inflict. Afford him but a ray of this coveted sympathy, and you made his happiness, and your own by reflection. Intercourse with the world had taught him how rarely the finer feelings or higher sentiments are responded to, and a shrinking from their exposure in his own case led him to conceal them under the light robe of pleasantry. Hence he was sometimes suspected of want of earnestness by those who, as D'Israeli remarks, "were not intimately acquainted with the man."

His fund of general information contributed to the charm of his conversational powers, for with him knowledge was as ready to hand as it was various. It seemed to spring spontaneously at the sight of any thing with which it could be associated. Memory while she held her treasures with a firm hand, generously shared them with the companion of the walk or the acquaintance of the social hour. At the same time there was no assumption, no affectation of superiority in his manner: it was perfectly natural and simple.

Possessing great musical talent, a fine ear, and the power of modulating his voice so as to blend with others, and the still rarer gift of composing a part extempore to any melody, his assistance was sought

as a valuable acquisition in social music. Before his illness his whistle was singularly rich, and he frequently used it as an accompaniment. The writer never heard it; but a gentleman referring to an evening spent in his society many years since, thus describes it, "I never heard human whistle so clear, so distinct, and brilliant: it was like a flute."*

Perhaps what he was in general society may be best shown by the impression he made on acquaintances of various tastes and habits whom from time to time he casually met. Among the many tributes of respect to his memory and to "his sterling qualities both of heart and mind," which the writer has received, one or two may be selected bearing on the salient points of his character. A recent friend, who with his lady were the last guests who were staying with him before he left Malvern for Scotland, writes, "I cannot let this opportunity pass without offering my humble tribute of respect to your late husband's memory. My acquaintance with Mr. Roby was, as you are aware, of brief duration, but I can most unaffectedly, and with sincere gratitude say, that during that period, I learned much of him—more than I ever learned in my life from any single person. It

* He would sometimes ventriloquise for the amusement of his friends. The incessant invention required to sustain the wit of three, and sometimes four, interlocutors, combined with the physical effort, kept the powers of both mind and body on the stretch to a degree that exhausted him more than anything else in which he engaged. See *Stewart's Phil. Hum. Mind.* III. 229—224.

was impossible to be with him without catching something of his earnestness and enthusiasm. Would he had been spared! His death was a severe loss to me. I had hoped to enjoy his society during the coming summer, to mature in his company those tastes which, if he did not infuse into me, he certainly roused from their dormancy. But this was not to be! Like all who ever came into contact with him, I was struck, on my introduction to Mr. Roby, by the variety of his acquirements, then by their elegant intellectual character. His energy in the acquisition of knowledge had amassed a great store of material for intellectual enjoyment—his wonderful “*order*” had arranged it in the happiest and most available manner. I think I never in my life saw a man of greater mental activity. *He had no lounging moments.* And yet I saw but the *relaxation* of his mind.”

One who knew him intimately the last two years of his life remarks, “Few persons I should imagine could have been in Mr. Roby’s society without feeling a peculiar charm, a gladdening influence, which made life appear bright and genial. Intercourse with him, invariably gave me a sense of power: this made me from the first recognise him as a man of genius. A magician in the regions of the ideal himself, he seemed to inspire his listener with the same mastery over its elements. Whatever might be the topic under notice, it stood out with new beauty as he handled it. His conversation, enriched from a thou-

sand sources, sparkled like the many facets of the well-cut diamond."

A very old friend who ranks among the first dramatists of the day in speaking of intercourse in years long since departed, characterised him as "a man of rich imagination, and the warmest and soundest heart." Adding in confirmation of the latter trait, "I was a perfect stranger when he received me as a brother, and took on himself the entire management of a course of lectures which I delivered in Rochdale several years ago, and which proved to be very remunerative chiefly through his cordially-exerted influence."

Another in writing of him, after dwelling with affectionate admiration on other traits of character, notices "his great good nature and kindness of heart, particularly the good-humoured manner in which he bore the expression of opinions different from his own, which by many would not have been taken so patiently. The extreme versatility of his talents placed at his command, acquirements the most varied, such as few persons attain to, and his kind and agreeable manner of imparting the knowledge he possessed was equally remarkable. His talent and exquisite humour in relating one of his stories or an old tradition, I can scarcely imagined to have been equalled."

Several friends have remarked that during their last interview with him, the conversation turned to the highest subjects, in some cases terminating by a short striking remark on his part, too valuable to be forgotten. A slight instance of this occurred in his last conversation

with the friend just quoted. It happened to be on a subject often discussed before, — art in connection with religion as exemplified in the fine old ecclesiastical structures of our country. No one possessed a deeper sense of their beauty than himself, but his mind at the same time comprehended the possibility of losing sight of the spiritual in admiration of the material, and at the close of the conversation, his last words were, “Well good bye, remember *we must not worship wood and stone.*” The aptness of the remark, the tone in which it was uttered, fixed it in the memory of the listener, and it is now treasured as a parting warning. There is a sacred pleasure in dwelling on conversations like these, involving high moral truths, elements of the intercourse yet to be renewed.

It was always in a circle narrower than that of general society, that he was seen to most advantage. When he felt he was surrounded only by those of congenial tastes he came out truly himself. His conversation then flowed without any restraint, he blended the ideal with the real in a way that showed a spirit gifted

“To pierce the mist o’er life’s deep meanings spread.”

A distinguished essayist of the present century compares himself to those toys which we sometimes see formed of box within box. His outer character he tells us was visible to all; to friends in proportion to their intimacy he threw off case after case; the sight of the innermost was reserved for himself, or for only one other. So here too was a narrower circle within that

of closest friendship, where one more covering cast aside, his character displayed itself without any reserve. What he might have been to the *valet* "who looked at him with valet eyes," the writer knows not, but by one to whom that character was bared as to none besides, so far from seeming any less from the intimate acquaintance of daily life, its true nobleness was only then fully recognised. It is not every character that bears the near scrutiny afforded by insight through the little things of life. Fewer still grow "right worshipful" under such inspection. *He* did both. His feelings repressed, as we have seen in childhood, he had not been in the habit of expressing them freely to the objects of his affection. The writer learned far more of the strength of his love for his children, from remarks he made when alone with her, and from the regard he paid to the effect which any step he took might have on their welfare, than from any ordinary demonstrations to them. The anxiety he evinced during the first holidays his boys spent with her, that she should understand them, and the pains he took to draw out the most interesting points of their characters, told more forcibly than words, his concern for their happiness. Though he rarely joined in their amusements himself, yet the quiet delight with which he would stand and watch when she happened to do anything of the kind showed how dear even their pleasures were to him.

It has been a common reproach against literary men, that they are undesirable companions in private life,

prone to betray unworthy jealousy of the talents of those around them ; though brilliant in society, fretful or unsocial at home. Here was one more added to the many examples of the contrary. Neither mirth nor talents, courtesy nor generous feeling, nor any thing that adorns or makes life happy, was reserved like holiday attire for going abroad. One who though admitting he could not brook defeat at his favourite chess, from any other lady, would yet say he should have lost the game to his wife with pleasure, because he should feel her triumph his own, could not have been an undesirable home companion.

It is by trifles such as these, that what the gifted are in private life is seen. That it may not invariably be thus is admitted, but the solution is easy. Fireside happiness depends not on the presence or absence of talent, but on the harmony of natural disposition, character, and taste. Genius neither commands this, nor can supply its deficiency. It only renders its possessor more keenly alive to the want of congeniality, and those around perchance more wretched from the conscious lack of power to make its happiness. The man of genius may not only make home the most blessed spot on earth, but with the blessing of God give a brilliancy and an intensity to domestic happiness, which none besides can ; peopling the wastes of every day life, with bright thoughts that never die, till little is left of mortal existence, that is not to be continued in the higher life to come.

But there were yet higher endowments — talents are but as the beautiful lamp, spiritual life the light they enshrine ; and when that light glows with an intensity, that throws out the fair form, and exquisitely-moulded figures, till the very lamp becomes brilliant, a light-giving thing, then indeed is it a vessel “fit for the Master’s use,” to the glory of His name whose *workmanship* the lamp is, but whose *breath* the light within. And that to all the rich gifts already described, was added that which is pre-eminently THE GIFT OF GOD, even “Eternal Life through Christ Jesus our Lord,” is the point of deepest interest. Taught as we have seen by the discipline of suffering, his were the convictions of experience, not those of the understanding merely ; he felt throughout his whole nature, his utter powerlessness to erect himself into a consciously virtuous being, and he felt as strongly that in the salvation of Christ alone was that which at once bringing pardon and imparting holiness, meets all the deep-seated wants of our nature, and raises us to the dignity of “sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.” With a heart thrilling to its very centre with a sense of unutterable need, he clung to the promises of the Gospel. And as time advanced and the hidden life grew stronger, and daily intercourse united the spirit more closely to God as its Father, through faith in Christ Jesus, his character assumed more and more of the likeness of that blessed state which it has now entered. Deep humility and self-distrust habitually marked his religion. In a

letter dated April 1849, after detailing a circumstance which occurred during a short stay at Clifton, very gratifying to him as an author, he adds "I may say all this to *you* because you understand me. . . But I feel it is not safe to *indulge* in it. A momentary glance at one's position — and then back again into the only safe place, — low at the Master's feet in love and humiliation, 'What hast thou, that thou hast not received?'" "I am so afraid of *myself*" was an expression he often used in the most intimate conversation. He felt it was only by the daily impartation of a strength greater than his own, that spiritual life was sustained. All those sentiments in the inspired writings, which ordinarily to the men of the world, are either mysteries or meaningless phrases, now comprehended in the fulness of their truth, had become the utterances of his own soul; "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the SON of GOD, who loved me and gave Himself for me." He went to the scriptures for his code of morality, as well as for the promise of the life to come. Never under any circumstances did he shrink from performing what he considered to be Christian duty, or from avowing what he believed to be religious truth. The tone of Cowper's hymns harmonised more with the prevailing cast of his mind than that of any other sacred lyrics. Those of them which are to be found in Lady Huntingdon's collection, were associated with his earliest recollections, and when his spirit was all unconsciously preparing itself for a speedy and unlooked-for summons

into the immediate presence of GOD, the strains of the poet, who so emphatically learned "in suffering" what he taught "in song," cheered and animated one kindred in spirit, as in faith. There is something pleasant in the thought that the strains which his mother might have sung by his cradle, were the latest given forth by his own rich voice.

While lowliness of mind before God, and a constant desire to serve his fellow-men, were perhaps the most conspicuous features of his religious character, the overflowings of a grateful spirit must not be overlooked. Thanksgiving formed an essential part of his religion ; neither the simple pleasures nor the richer blessings of life were lost upon him. Day by day he seemed as though he would never be thankful enough. His recognition of the hand of GOD in all he enjoyed was very vivid.

How far back the religious element of his character may be traced, it is impossible to say. The human mind is susceptible of the fear of GOD, and doubtless the actions may be modified thereby, long before any distinct consecration to his service, or, which must ordinarily precede it, that true self-knowledge which makes the need of a Saviour felt. That best of blessings the example of a Christian life in his parents, was around his earliest days, so that his first ideas of right and wrong must have taken a Christian tone. And that as he rose into life, the claims of a Creator and Saviour on his love and service occupied his

attention, the writer is aware. Never indeed will be forgotten the intensity of feeling with which, within the last twelvemonths of his life he would sometimes refer to one among his youthful associates, who at that early period encouraged him in the practice of spiritual duties. He knew what a life passed amid the stir of the world was, how the hot noon dries up the current of early feeling, and the thorns of care choke the hidden life; and vivid anxiety for his friend's spiritual state, mingled with the grateful remembrance of forty years ago. A sentiment which now burst forth fresher than ever, because he knew as he had never done before, from what the salvation of GOD is a deliverance.

His sympathy for others in a religious point of view was very strong; the deep pity, amounting to personal grief, which he has expressed in intimate conversation, when speaking of any whose life or avowed principles, testified they were "without hope, and without GOD in the world," showed that his religion drew him the nearer to all his race. Strongly as principle and feeling alike led him to seek to promote in any way in his power the highest good of his fellow-creatures, the remembrance of his deep spiritual suffering caused him to take a deeper interest in those whose minds were in any degree agonised and bewildered as his had been. He would have considered no amount of mental effort or physical fatigue too great to encounter, could he thereby have "ministered to a mind diseased." In 1848 when visiting friends in

the south of England, he was told of a poor old woman whose distress of mind had baffled every attempt to relieve it. He went to her cottage, sat down and listened to her complaints, anticipating them in great measure from his own vividly-remembered distress. She was cheered by finding another, who could tell beforehand what she was going to say; and when he reached down the Bible, and began reading his own favourite passages, "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the GOD of Israel will not forsake them, I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys" &c., and entering into her feelings, showed her that the glorious promises of God were made to the wretched and self-condemning, light seemed to burst upon her mind, and her thankfulness and delight knew no bounds; and second only to hers, were his own. — The most brilliant success in society had never afforded a pleasure like this. He seldom referred to his own past suffering, when he did so it was in a brief but touching manner: thus in a letter dated March 1849 he writes, "Pray give my very best remembrance to Mrs. — and tell her that when I come to — I *intend* sitting once more in her arm chair, now with what different feelings. I had not then found 'a hiding place from the storm, and a covert from the tempest.' Now however I hope I have found Christ as 'the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'"

The true lowliness of spirit and willingness to be set aside, with which he commenced any undertaking, evinced a chastened spirit, which showed that he had not suffered in vain. "How thankful," wrote he to a friend, "we ought to be that we are permitted even to attempt any thing for Him *who has given us all*, and though apparently we fail, yet, as you say, we are secure from disappointment; and, depend on it, some good will arise probably to ourselves, if not to others, from our least efforts; at any rate, if they lead us to more humility and dependence on Him, one great end will have been answered." And two months later, writing to the same friend, he observed:—"It does seem part of the discipline of life that we should aim at duty—just embark in what seems the very path we ought to pursue for our own and other's good, and then plainly be sent back to learn one very important lesson we are too apt to forget,—viz. that the great Master can do his work without us."*

In a letter dated February 22nd, 1850, after speaking of the happiness he had enjoyed of late in communion with GOD, and expressing his desire to serve Him, especially by comforting "the weary," he adds, "but they 'do His will who only stand and wait;' I am watching the course of events, and when HE

* Foster represents as "the *last* attainment of a zealously good man, the resignation to be as diminutive an agent as God pleases and as unsuccessful an one."—*Essay on the Application of the Epithet Romantic*. Letter V.

has work for me to do, I shall be appointed to it. In the meantime I am working with my pen what may be useful at one time or another."

The repose which belongs to maturity of character, indicated by the last extract, was not unnoticed at the time. It was one of those traits then marked, but now fully understood. Many things which the writer took for philosophic superiority to trifles, and admired as such at the time, she now recognises as Christian elevation of character. There was about him an air—not exactly of indifference to the world or of separation from it, for he entered with zest into the social pleasures and all the higher pursuits of life—but of something like a consciousness of still nobler relations than any which connected his spirit with earth, an abiding recognition of a world to which he more properly belonged and still better than this which he so much enjoyed; and he seemed to stand with one foot uplifted ready to enter on that not distant world. It was a fulfilling of the divine precept, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men waiting for their Lord."

An intimate friend when referring to daily intercourse with him, enjoyed for some time during the last autumn of his life, writes: "The advance in all things connected with the spiritual good of himself, or of others, was very striking—there was a dignity of deportment, a seriousness when treating of divine things, and an anxious desire for the religious improvement of

all whom he could influence, that, superadded to his natural cheerfulness and lively wit, made him a most delightful companion. Still this increase of grace was chiefly preparing him for the approaching removal: he was taken because he was *ready*. Never did a bed of languishing sickness more evidently fit the sufferer for 'going home' than did his beautiful frame of mind during the happy months that preceded his sudden removal." Not better chosen could one expression of the above have been, had the writer of the note recollected Mr. Roby's crest—a sheaf of corn (*garb*), and motto "I AM READY." Rapid had the ripening been—those years of suffering had done their work and the brief, but bright, sunshine that followed, made the sheaf ready for the garner.*

The mind lingers on this aspect of his character. Most precious to dwell upon now is—not the memory of his rich talents—not the recollection of his warm and generous affection, which, like the sunset glow, invests all connected with him, with a brightness that seems as if it would never grow dim, but—the thought that he was, in the true, not merely in the conventional, sense of the word, a CHRISTIAN. This alone can connect the beloved ones who are "gone home" with all that is real in comfort.—The workings of the sorrowful

* It is not perhaps always borne in mind, that corn, when cut, is not immediately ready to be carried home. It requires to stand some little time in shock—that the process of ripening may be completed.

heart are no longer vague guesses and fruitless longings, but sure and living hopes founded on "the true sayings of GOD." And when the voice whose music stirred the very depths of the soul, as none other had power to do, can be no longer heard, the ear of the spirit is quickened for voiceless intercourse. And since those sayings assure us that those whom we call the dead still live, in all the integrity of their spiritual being, we feel that they can scarcely be said to be gone—that the one in spirit are one for eternity—that their love for, and interest in us are not shaken—and if neither ear nor eye can catch sound or glimpse of what was dearer than life, still we are not without tokens of their presence. The intercourse of spirit with spirit is not destroyed because one veil of flesh is dropped; rather it is so much the nearer. The flow of reciprocated affection, the joy as truly shared, and sorrow as tenderly lightened with whispered assurances of sympathy, all tell of an union over which death hath no power. Henceforward no abiding sense of loneliness, can weigh down the heart made strong in an affection which,

"Doth draw the very soul into itself."

and brings it into companionship with "the spirits of just men made perfect" in the presence of their Father and our Father. All that remains for earth is "the Patience of Hope." Death to the survivor as well as to his victim has "lost his sting." Thanks be unto GOD,

who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Thus faintly and inadequately have been portrayed the life and character of one whom his Maker had endowed with genius, and sent forth for life's brief day. His appointed task was to go to his fellow men, when the fever of earth's turmoil is on them, and, by transporting them into other scenes, to charm away their cares and weariness for a while; bringing one character after another, and adventures in quick succession, before the reader, till he rises refreshed, and with new spirit goes forth again to the conflict of life; having found too, during his brief sojourn in that ideal region, many a hint of valuable information, many a true moral principle.

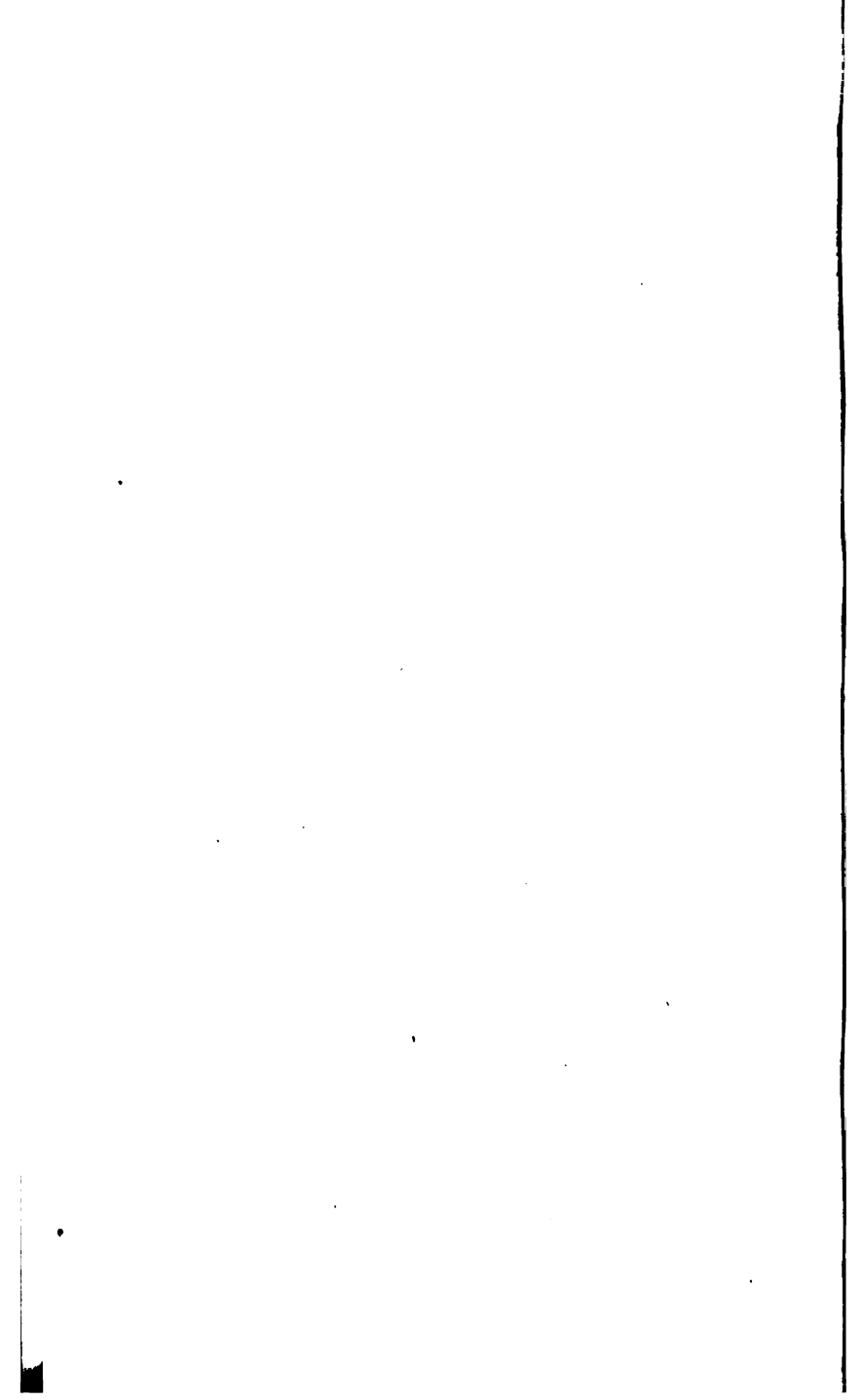
And if increasing light from that world towards which he was so rapidly advancing showed him how more distinctly to place before his fellow men the characteristic truths of Christianity as the foundation of all that is good and enduring, and to consecrate his talents to the highest interests of mankind, and then, with all his plans and purposes ripening, GOD called him away, it was only to enter on worthier labours in that world, where “His servants serve Him day and night.” Strange as such a cutting short of a life so lately renewed in

* Since the above was prepared for the press, the writer has met with an interesting illustration of the power of the consolation there indicated, in that *unique* biography, the Life of Mrs. Fletcher of Madeley. Conder's exquisite poem “the Reverie” treats of the same thought. It is the poet's subject, in the poet's hands.

physical vigour, and devoted to the high service of God appears, the very suddenness was in keeping with the whole tenor of an existence which knew no idle moments—as if not an hour of such a spirit was to be wasted—to-day working here in the full vigour of his mortal life, to-morrow on the other side of death, an immortal spirit serving in its appointed rank before the throne of God.

Sense would fain follow, and, amid the shadowy forms of that world, catch a sight of one so dear: but the eye is strained in vain. Yet Faith can hear her Father's voice: "BLESSED are the dead that die in the Lord," and she is content: for "THEY SHALL HUNGER NO MORE, NEITHER THIRST ANY MORE; NEITHER SHALL THE SUN LIGHT ON THEM, NOR ANY HEAT. FOR THE LAMB WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE SHALL FEED THEM, AND SHALL LEAD THEM UNTO LIVING FOUNTAINS OF WATERS, AND GOD SHALL WIPE AWAY ALL TEARS FROM THEIR EYES."

MUSIC.

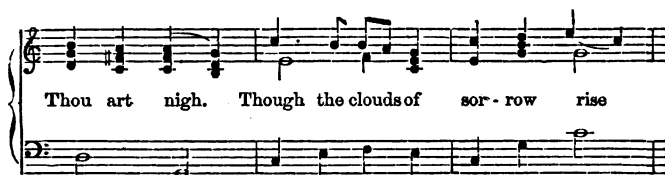


WORDS BY J. ROBY.

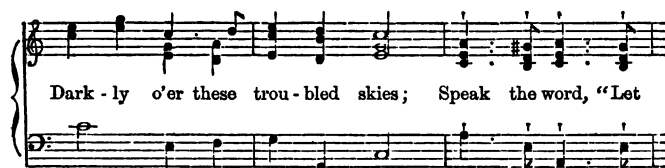
AIR FROM A MODERN CONCERTO.

Slow.

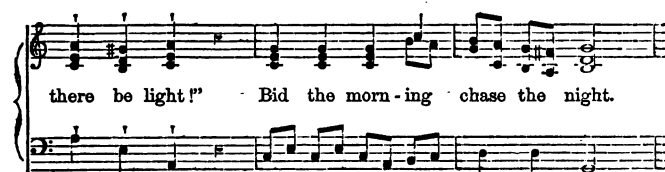
Fa - ther, hear a sup-pliant's cry; Hear, oh hear, for



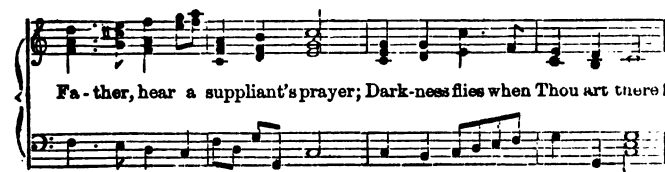
Thou art nigh. Though the clouds of sor - row rise



Dark - ly o'er these trou - bled skies; Speak the word, "Let



there be light!" Bid the morn - ing chase the night.

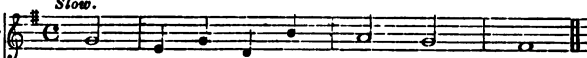


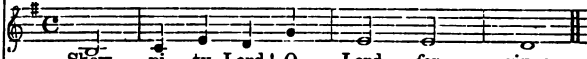
Fa - ther, hear a suppliant's prayer; Dark-ness flies when Thou art there!

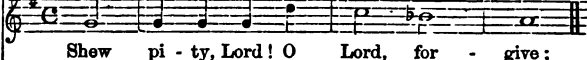
THE MELODY BY J. ROBY; THE HARMONIES VARIED BY V. NOVELLO.

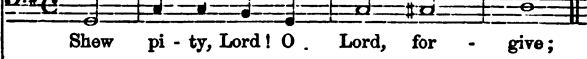
[Extracted, by permission, from the Congregational and Chorister's Psalm and Hymn-Book. Dufour, Piccadilly.]


Slow.

TREBLE.  Shew pi - ty, Lord! O Lord, for - give;

ALTO.  Shew pi - ty, Lord! O Lord, for - give;

TENOR.  Shew pi - ty, Lord! O Lord, for - give;
See lower.

BASS.  Shew pi - ty, Lord! O Lord, for - give;

 *Slow.*

 Let a re - pent - ing re - bel live.

 Let a re - pent - ing re - bel live.

 Let a re - pent - ing re - bel live.

 Let a re - pent - ing re - bel live.



Are not thy mer - cies large and free?

Are not thy mer - cies large and free?

Are not thy mer - cies large and free? May

Are not thy mer - cies large and free? May

May not a sin - ner trust in Thee?

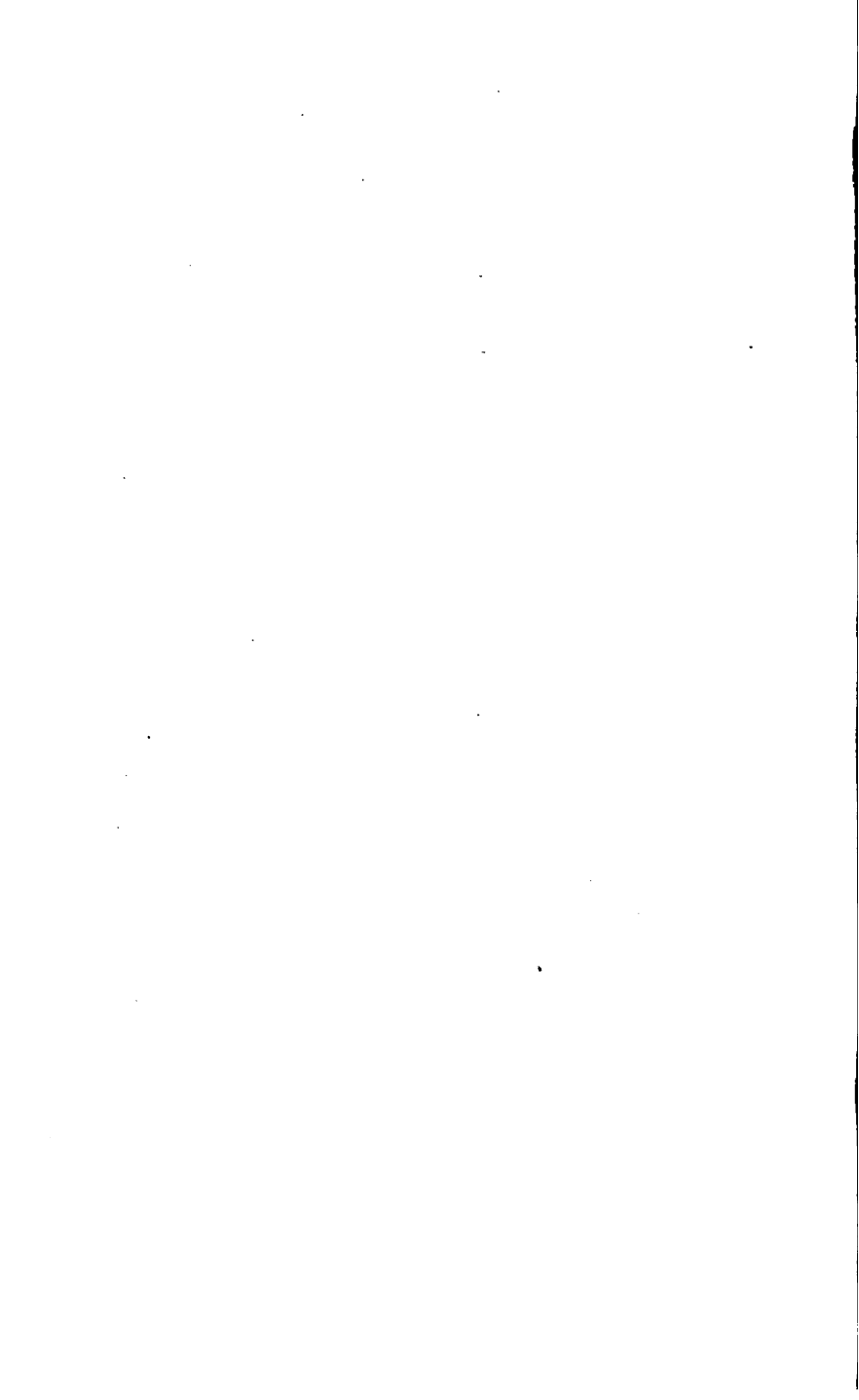
May not a sin - ner trust in Thee?

not a sin - ner trust in Thee?

not a sin - ner trust in Thee?

My lips with shame my sins confess,
 Against thy law, against thy grace;
 Lord, should thy judgment grow severe,
 I am condemned, but Thou art clear.

Yet save a humbling sinner, Lord,
 Whose hope, still hovering round thy word,
 Would light on some sweet promise there,
 Some sure support against despair.



LYRICS.

Some of the following short poems were composed early in life, while two or three of those last in order are of a very recent date. Those to which dates are appended are from another pen. It was intended by Mr. Roby that they should appear with his own productions. The survivor will be forgiven the mournful pleasure of thus partially fulfilling one of those purposes whose "inward light," was wont to

"Keep the path before him always bright."

LINES

WRITTEN ON THE DEPARTURE OF FRIENDS FROM ENGLAND.



SWIFTLY go, thou bounding bark,
 As with an arrow's flight;
 The untamed winds thy coursers wild,
 The waves thy chariot bright.—
 But there are hearts within that shrine
 Where wilder billows swell,
 Where the last pang is quivering now
 The last fond word—“Farewell.”

Blow, ye breezes ! Gently roll,
 Thou vast and troubled deep!
 On thy still waters let the sigh
 Of dim-eyed sorrow sleep.
 Bright hearts, bright hearths, and merry homes.
 Their voice is on the wind.—
 Be hush'd, ye blasts ; too loud ye bring
 Their echoes on the mind.

Soon these hallow'd shores shall fade,
 Fast as the summer cloud,
 And stranger climes and stranger forms
 Pass, like a pageant proud.
 But blessings still your path pursue,
 Where'er that path may lie ;
 Since every devious maze ye trace
 Beneath a guiding eye.

Yon evening star that trembling dips
 Beneath the western sea,
 Awhile, like him, your lonesome flight,
 Like his, your destiny. —
 Though setting now in clouds and gloom,
 The day-spring shall arise,
 And yon pale star, like you, appear
 In pomp from eastern skies !

May HE whose word the billows calm'd,
 And sooth'd those seas to rest,
 Yet whisper in the gentlest winds,
 That breathe on ocean's breast.
 But there are waves of mightier power
 His voice alone can still,
 The soul's keen throb,—its louder surge
 Grows peaceful at his will !

Swiftly go, thou bounding bark,
 As with an arrow's flight,
 The untamed winds thy coursers wild,
 The waves thy chariot bright !
 But there are hearts within that shrine
 Where wilder billows swell,
 Where the last pang is quivering now
 The last fond word—"Farewell !

PREFACE TO A LADY'S ALBUM.



AN Album? — 'Tis a pretty book I wis,
 Bound up in cow-skin—or sometimes in calf,
 All tool'd and gilt—where every pert-eyed miss,
 Her pretty pouting lips (too ripe by half),
 Hangs o'er the snow-white page — then steals a laugh,
 Something between a simper and a smile ;—
 “Law, I can't write ! — Ridiculous, to spoil
 I have no notion——Will an extract do
 From Moore or Byron ? ” “ No, write something new.”

AN Album? — 'Tis a wide waste blank—a page
 All bright and glorious, like the morn of life,
 Not darken'd with rude blots ;— no dim presage
 Scrawl'd o'er the bliss-like future,— where no knife,
 Like eating care, obliterates.— The strife,
 The agony, those hours shall know, nor trace,
 Nor track, steals o'er their smooth, unruffled face.
 If joy or woe those opening leaves shall bring,
 Who shall unfold their dim foretokening ?

And would'st thou have me in that mirror look,
 Shadowing the first page in thy destiny,
 Or weave a frontlet to Fate's Album-book ?
 It should be joyous were mine Fate's decree.
 Like opera-overtures, the melody

I know the story should foretoken, telling
Of love, hope, joy, and all that sort of thing ;
Or, like the pictures on a raree-show,
Blazon the matchless wonders hid below.

But I'm no prophet ! — what these pages may
Or may not gather, hard to say methinks.
'Tis somewhat strange, e'en for this marvellous day,
Writing a preface to blank leaves,— a sphynx
'Twould puzzle to undo, like Hymen's links !
The paper's pretty, and a pretty book :
So far seems certain. What may next be shook
From Fate's grim bag, *n'importe* — umquhile, I trow,
Time flits, hopes bud, and wither ere they blow.

When closed the last page of this history,
If joy or sorrow on that morn shall rise,
What I may then, or thou shalt surely be
I dare not mutter with articulate voice !
And yet I'll try a word or so (no lies,
I hate them) ; 'tis irrevocable fate
I now unfold. Listen, as though there sate
The wizard seer thy destiny revealing ;
Bright hopes, grim horror, o'er thy vision stealing !

“ Oft shall wearied hope expire,
Bliss none other bosom knows,
Love shall scorch thee with its fire,
Maiden, ere these pages close.

“ Oft shall visions warm and bright,
Glimmer on thine aching brain,
Swifter fading from thy sight,
Ne'er shall dawn those dreams again.

“Oft shall throb that wearied breast,
Pulse on pulse in anguish beating,
Oft shall sink that storm to rest,
Hope and love those wild waves meeting.

“Love and hate, and joy and fear,
Shall thy bosom oft o’erflow,
All that woman’s heart may bear,
All that woman’s breast may know.

“Oft shall friends thy bosom cherish’d,
Change to deeper, deadlier foes.
Love shall die and hope have perish’d,
Maiden, ere these pages close!”

TO ———



WE have met and we have parted,
Meet it were that love should die;
Teach the winds, thou fond false-hearted,
Teach the light wave constancy!
We have loved as we shall never
Dare on earth to love again!
Hearts thus twined, when they shall sever,
Wear no more love's bootless chain.

Tell the waves to calm their motion,
Tell the wind thy power to flee,
Bid the chafed and restless ocean
Sleep, aye, sleep unchangeably.
Will the lash'd wave cease its wailing?
Will the moaning billow rest?
Then may Hope with joys unfailing,
Fled like mine, appease thy breast.

STANZAS.

“LIGHTLY o’er the moon-lit sea
 Bounds my lover’s bark to me ;
 The breeze hath woo’d the fluttering sail,
 Fast flies the prow from the wanton gale.”
 The lady sung.—’Twas the lone sea-mew
 O’er the waters wail’d, as he wistfully flew.

“Swiftly through the curling foam,
 Waft, ye winds, my true love home :
 I hear not yet the dripping oar,
 The surge uncleft yet greets the shore.”
 The lady gazed.—’Twas the rushing blast,
 Like some spirit of might, on the waters pass’d !

Darkly o’er the troubled deep,
 Ruder winds the billows sweep ;
 The lady hath left her lattice bower,—
 “Why tarries my love till the midnight hour?”
 Swift answer came.—’Twas a shuddering moan,
 As her lover’s cold corse at her feet was thrown !

STANZAS FOR MUSIC.*

FORGOTTEN SO SOON

Are thy vows when we parted,
 Have other links bound thee,
 Thou fickle false-hearted?
 Go fling to the winds thy last tenderest vow,
 They are not so changing, so reckless as thou.

Can the tear on thy cheek,
 The warm gush from thy heart,
 So soon dry their torrent?
 So quickly depart?
 Like dew on the flower, like the web when 'tis broken,—
 Oh frailer than these, woman's vows when they're spoken.

And was it for this,
 In my heart's holiest shrine,
 No memory was hidden,
 No image but thine?
 And I deem'd thee some hallow'd, some heaven-given
 thing,
 Entwined round my bosom for ever to cling.

* This song, and one from the "Traditions of Lancashire," "They bade me sing, they bade me smile," were set to music by Mr. Charles Smith, author of "Hohenlinden" and other popular songs. The stanzas immediately following were also set by him as a glee. Cramer, Addison, & Co. 201 Regent Street.

I had perill'd my all
On that treacherous bark,
A woman's fond love ;—
When the billows grew dark,
The bright sea was ruffled, the loud storm rush'd on,
My hopes are all wreck'd, and that light bark is gone.

Go, faithless, and weep !
For I scorn thy words now ;
Yet no tears thou wilt shed
Can heal one broken vow ;
No weeping can cleanse that one foul perjured stain,
Or quench the keen fire that now scorches my brain.

Yet stay, false one, stay ;
There's a worm in thy breast,
A gloom on thy soul
Where no sunshine shall rest ;
To which e'en the agony thou hast made mine
Is blessing and bliss when compared but with thine.

THE FAIRIES' SONG.

MERRY, merry elves we be,
 O'er the bright and bounding sea,
 Dancing merrily.
 We glide to the shore in our fairy bark,
 When the moon looks out on high,
 And the waves twinkle round us in many a spark,
 Like radiant melody.
 We dance to the sound of the calm cold billow,
 Ere it sleeps on the sand, ere it dies on its pillow.

Merry, merry elves we be,
 Under the greenwood tree,
 Dancing merrily.
 And the moon through yon white and fleecy cloud,
 Pale, silent, and softly creeps,
 Like a spectre clad in a silvery shroud,
 While nature quietly sleeps.
 We merrily trip it with twinkling feet,
 As the leaves rustle o'er us in melody sweet.
 Away, away,
 At break of day,
 For night is the fairies' holiday.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC.*

FARE thee well ! the dream is o'er ;
 Loved one fare thee well !
 Tears and vows deceive no more,
 When broken every spell.

Stars that fade in morning light,
 Suns that set shall rise ;
 But no dawn illumines the night,
 When Hope's last glimmer dies !

Oh ! lay me where the willows weep,
 On some dreary shore ;
 Calm shall be that colder sleep,
 Life's dark vision o'er.

Though earthly joys for ever fled,
 Yet mercy whispers nigh,
 Immortal life beyond the dead,
 And bliss beyond the sky.

* These stanzas have been set to a Spanish air by T. Ashworth.
 D'Almaine & Co., Soho Square.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC.



On yon dark bosom'd mountain
The sunbeams are glancing,
On lake and on fountain,
The light ray is dancing.
But yon mountain is dark, though the sunbeams are bright,
And yon fountain is cold, though 'tis quivering with light.

So one bosom with sadness
Feels dark and opprest,
While around, mirth and gladness
Illumine each breast.
And the smiles that to others with rapture may glow,
Leave that bosom alone to its darkness and woe.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC.



I've seen the smile on woman's cheek,
The tear in woman's eye ;
But as I gazed, that smile grew dim,
That liquid fount was dry.

Oh, I have heard her say she loved,
And kiss'd the plighted token : —
But I have lived to feel how false
What woman's lip hath spoken !

Yes, lighter than the lightest breath
That skims the morning air
Is woman's vow, that binds the heart
In witchery or despair !

How she hath wrung this bleeding breast,
I may not, dare not tell !
I only know that I have loved
Too fondly, and too well.

STANZAS.

SAY, what is Love? — a bubble
 On life's dull current fleeting,
 A thousand hues and visions bright
 On its frail surface meeting;
 It breaks, and where that vision fair?
 Ocean's dark depth may answer, Where?

Say what is Love? — 'tis light
 On life's dark billows thrown;
 Oh, glorious the first glance
 That on those waters shone!
 'Tis gone, — those waves, illum'd no more,
 Roll darkly on life's desert shore.

Say what is Love? — a glimpse,
 Life's stormy clouds between,
 Of that bright heaven, where all
 Is cloudless and serene;
 A look, ere night and darkness come,
 Beyond the terrors of the tomb!

Come all whose blighted bosom,
 Love's cruel pangs deceive,
 Say what shall be the garland
 For lovers' brows to weave?
 A lone leaf on a blasted tree,
 This, this Love's coronal shall be!

SONG.

The following lines were written to the air No. 4., in the 5th book of
Mendelsohn's "Lieder ohne Worte."

OH, say not, lady,
That ought could ever
This fond heart sever
From love and thee

Go, bid the billow
Now calm its motion,
The restless ocean
Rest endlessly !

Should'st thou deceive me,—
All earthly blessing,
Not worth possessing,—
Away I'd flee.

And far from home, love —
My lost hopes mourning —
Nor thence returning, —
I'd pray for thee !

And though a stranger
To earthly gladness,
There is a sadness
More glad than mirth, —

The joy of sorrow ;
The sweetest pleasure,
A tear-bought treasure
Of heavenly birth !

Though all around me
Were darkness veiling,
Yet light unfailing
In death shall rise !
Though day departeth,
Nor cloud nor sorrow
Shall dim that morrow
In yonder skies !

THE FRIEND.



THERE is a friend, whose love
 Is closer than a brother's, —
 Tender, endearing, — 'tis above
 E'en fondness like a mother's: —
 She may forget her suckling's cry,
 His ear attends the feeblest sigh.

On Him thy panting breast,
 By care and anguish riven,
 Bleeding and torn, hath found its rest,
 From other refuge driven: —
 And earth, with all its joys and fears,
 Hath ceased to bring or smiles or tears.

Morn's dew-enamell'd flowers,
 The cloud through azure sweeping,
 Their brightness owe to sadder hours,
 Their calm, to storms and weeping. —
 That Friend shall thus each tear illumine,
 To forms of glory shape that gloom.

Eve's sapphire cloud hath been
 Dark as the brow of sorrow;
 Those dew pearls wreath'd in emerald green,
 Once wept a coming morrow: —
 But glory sprang o'er earth and sky,
 And all was light and ecstasy.

Yon star upon the brow
Of night's grey coronet,
Morn's radiant blush, eve's ruddy glow,
Had yon bright sun ne'er set,
Were hidden still from mortal sight,
Lost in impenetrable light.

Then should afflictions come,
Dark as the shroud of even,
A thousand glories glitter from
The burning arch of heaven !
Though earth be wrapt in doubt and gloom,
New splendours dawn o'er daylight's tomb.

And who that azure hung
With lamps of living fire?
Who, when the hosts of morning sung,
First listen'd to their quire?
The Man of Sorrows mercy sent,—
In heav'n the God! —the Omnipotent!

HE is that friend, whose love
Nor life nor death shall sever!
Eternal as yon throne above,
Unchanged, endures for ever.
What would'st thou more, frail fabric of the dust;
OMNIPOTENCE thy Shield! —thy Refuge! —Trust!

LINES TO A LADY

WHOM THE AUTHOR HAD NEVER SEEN.



WHAT though thy form I ne'er beheld,
 Yet fancy oft would trace
 Expression, features, look, with all
 Their witchery or grace.

What though thy voice were never heard,
 I felt its melting tone,
 That came like some mysterious spell,
 Unbidden and alone !

I saw thee in the wingéd beam,
 First-born of morning light ;
 In darkness oft I saw thee still,
 A vision of the night.

And though unheard, unseen, — thy name
 The same sweet image brings,
 And fancy o'er the mimic scene,
 Her own bright halo flings.

Oh who shall tell the wondrous glimpse
 Imagination threw,
 As though past, present, and to come
 Were open to her view !

As though the hidden sense had now,
From earthly dross refin'd,
Pierc'd this material and left
Mortality behind !

And is not this a ray that breaks,
With unquench'd potency,
Forth from the Omnipotent,—a light
From his omniscient eye ?

A spark from that eternal mind,
First breath'd into our breast ;
An image of the Infinite,
On finite pow'rs impress'd.

And though debas'd, degraded, dim,
From heav'n's own light they shine,
Imagination, fancy, thought,
Their origin divine !

THE BIRCH

ON THE WORCESTERSHIRE BEACON, GREAT MALVERN.

It stood alone on the green hill side,
That fairy birchen tree,
Its yellow leaves in the autumn breeze
Were flutt'ring heavily.

The early frosts brought those pale leaves down,
Ere the storms of winter came ;
And stripp'd and bare stood my birchen tree,
But a wreck to tell its name.

I pass'd the place when the streams were still,
When the earth was chang'd to stone,
On the leafless boughs a hoary show'r,
As a spell of heav'n was thrown.

The glistening sprays by the wind were stirr'd,
Like a banner gently furl'd ;
It seem'd, in its pure and peerless grace,
A gift from another world.

And even thus in our inner life,
When the early frosts are come,
When the greenness has pass'd from life away,
And the music of earth is dumb ;

'Tis then that the light and hope of heav'n,
O'er the lonely heart are flung,
And our spirit knows a holier joy
Than that to which erst it clung.

And year by year is the type renew'd,
That our wayward hearts may learn,
There is peace for the stripp'd and wearied ones,
Who in faith to their Father turn.

1841.

ASTROLOGY.

'Tis said that in the burning stars
The fate of man is writ :
Yet quail not, Christian, at the sign ;
By Love those lamps are lit.

1848.

THE FIRST REVELATION.

Suggested by the story of a child, whose father, an educated man, but an infidel, if not an atheist, had not allowed him to receive any religious culture. Being one day reproved by a friend for using profane language, on the ground that it was displeasing to God, he enquired who was meant. He instantly apprehended with delight all that was told him of the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being, as if the idea had been latent in his mind, until thus called forth into recognised existence.

SHADOWS o'er the infant mind,
Floating dimly undefin'd
Like a picture scarce design'd.

Melody but half express'd,
Inarticulate at best,
Haunting ever that young breast.

But the magic word is spoken,
And the shades of night are broken,
And by that same lustrous token.

"GOD THE MIGHTY ONE," now near,
Memnon music on the ear
Falls articulate and clear.

And the day of life begun
By the newly risen sun,
In that light its paths are run.

Even so, when God reveal'd
To the eye by Death unseal'd,
Shall completed being yield,

Will the shadows which now lie,
As dim portents to the eye,
From the spirit's vision fly.

And the mystic sounds and sweet,
Which the untaught ear oft greet,
Shall a lucid tale repeat.

And mysterious spirit-life—
Past its agony and strife—
Be with seven-fold Glory rife.

1848.

AN EVENING HYMN.



FAINT falls the twilight dim,
 Woods, waves, their ev'ning hymn
 Murmur to Thee.

One pale star ocean seeks,
 One waveless glimmer breaks
 O'er that lone sea.

Softly the passing gale,
 Sighs like love's parting tale,
 Whispers not words.
 Clouds come not o'er that night,
 Stars burn with purer light
 Than earth affords.

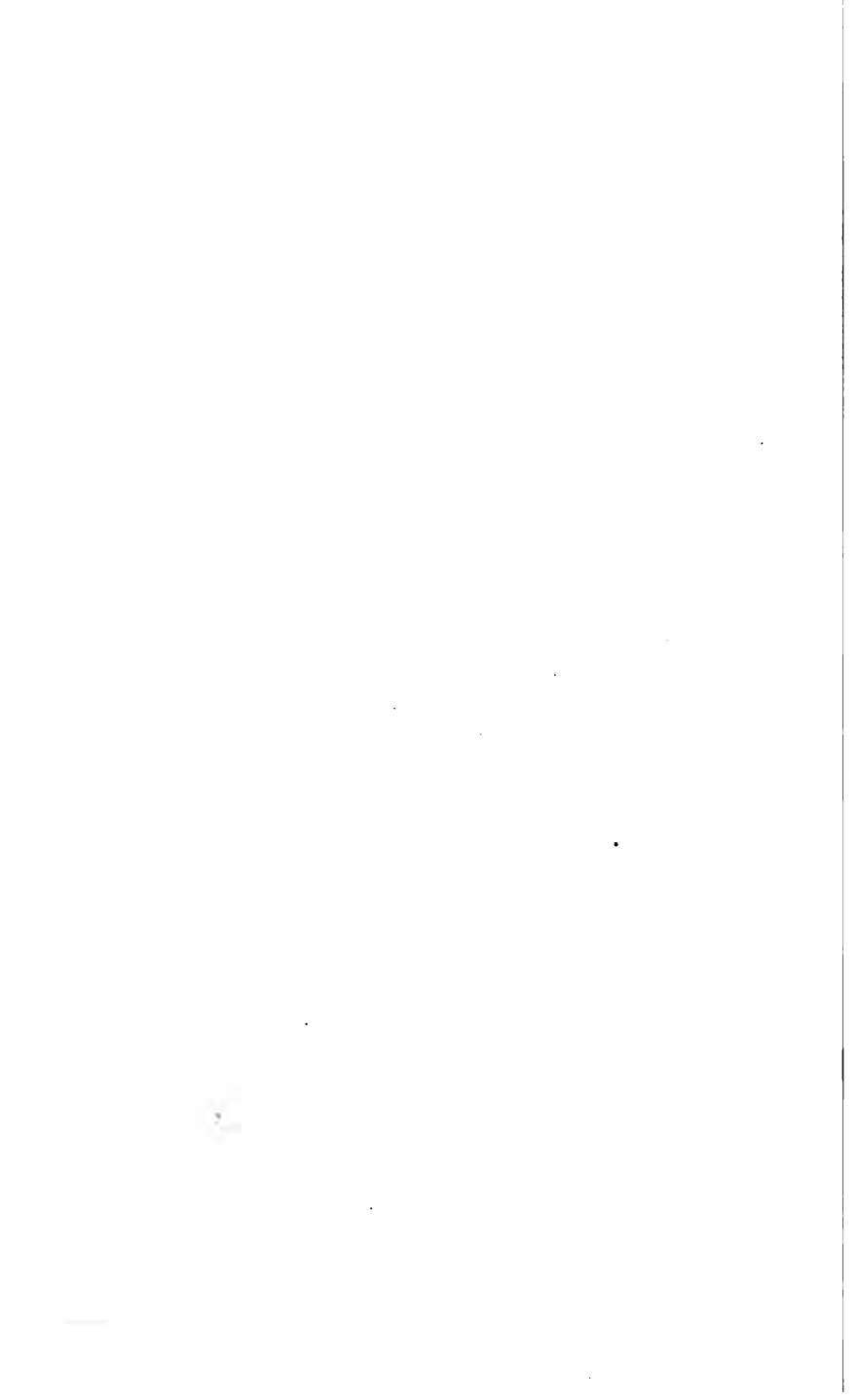
Come, Night, around this breast,
 Thy soothing dreamy rest
 Waft o'er my soul ;
 While thoughts of heav'nly birth,
 Untouch'd by aught of earth,
 Undimm'd may roll.—

Then like yon star may we
 Meet death's calm silent sea,
 Setting to rise.
 Bright'ning still while we sink,
 On that dread ocean brink,
 To other skies !



THE DUKE OF MANTUA.

A Tragedy.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN

ANDREA, *Duke of Mantua.*
RIDOLFI, *the Duke's Foster-brother.*
CARLOS, *in love with Hermione.*
BERTEAND, *Friend to Carlos.*
FABIAN, } *Pages attending on the Duke.*
SYLVIO, }
GIULIO, *a Minstrel attending on Carlos.*
STEPHANO, } *Servants to Ridolfi.*
ROLAND, }
Priest.
Grave-Digger.
Citizens of Mantua.

WOMEN.

BEATRICE, *Duchess of Mantua.*
HERMIONE, *Cousin to Ridolfi.*
LAURA, *Sister to Ridolfi.*
ZORAYDA, *a Gipsy.*
BLANCH, *Servant to Hermione.*

Guards, Soldiers, &c.

Scene — Mantua.

THE DUKE OF MANTUA.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

A Room in the Duke's Palace at Mantua.

Enter the DUKE and RIDOLFI.

RIDOLFI.

HERMIONE again visits my house.—

Your presence, good my lord, with your fair dame,
I would solicit.

DUKE.

Well, Ridolfi, be it so : — to-day,
If nought forbid the time : — Hermione,
Thou say'st ? — I do remember, yet so slight, 'tis scarce
The shadow of her form. But once, my brother,
'Twas one fair summer's eye, awhile I saw
Thy sprightly coz : a laughter-loving spirit,
She threw quick mirth as the unbidden shafts
Of innocent love, scattering with hand profuse
Her joyous pranks. I was but newly wedded,
Scarce past the honey-moon ; Beatrice hung
Fondly upon mine arm, and we too laugh'd,
On that still night, until the whispering woods

Grew loud, and thousand voices started forth
From bough and hoary stem, bursting as if
To riotous life ; and yet her giddy face,
Playful and changing as the restless wave,
I cannot fashion now from memory's storehouse —
How fares thy cousin ?

RIDOLFI.

Still by love, my lord,
She comes untamed ; but time, one delicate shade
Hath slightly pass'd upon her wanton mirth,
Softening the ruder bursts of her high spirit,
Tinged ofttime now with gentler thought.

DUKE.

'Tis well

When ripening years mellow the gaudy hue
Of youth's rich fancies, sparkling else too bright
For its repose.——We visit thee to-day.—
This tribute say we give Hermione.

RIDOLFI.

Much honour hold we from your presence :
Our poorer hospitality excuse,
As you are wont. Adieu ! No costly feast
We give, but our glad welcome.

[Exit.]

DUKE.

A brother still,—a friend

To cheer my way through life's dark wilderness.
Thou art a feeble light, and yet I love
To watch thy tremulous blaze, blessing the gloom,
And shedding round my path its thousand gems,
Sprinkling perchance some loathed and hideous form
With thy pale gleam. How tender hast thou been
To my worst weaknesses, my foibles, all
Heart-withering cares ! Though born to humbler honours,

I call thee friend. Well hast thou earn'd from me
That sacred name ! One bosom nourish'd us :
One hand our childhood rear'd ; twining we grew
Unto one stem, till riches and high birth
Bore me brief space from that beloved soil,—
That home, to which our very nature yet
Seems most akin.——

Of proud descent, unsullied as mine own,
Thou yet canst boast : if not of titled wealth,
Of outward garb, thy suit becomes thee well ;
And I do love thee more than if array'd
In ducal coronet. Beatrice too
Hath prized him for my sake, and her esteem
I do repay with tenfold love.——

Fierce, feverish love !—thine idle dreams,—fleeting
As cloud-fed vapour, yon o'erarching bow
Bestrides,—fade as the sunbeam on the sky
Dispels the glowing mist. 'Tis well, if then
The welkin clear'd, each circumstance and form,—
Fashion'd realities by truth impress'd
Upon the craving eye-balls,—O 'tis well
If on these fix'd and palpable images
Of roused and wakening sense, the eye may rest
With unappeased delight ! But if the while
Love's light-wing'd visions fade, nought fills the void
Save chilling wastes, trackless, unlimited,
That echo back their own grim desolation
To the appalled spirit. What escape
The shrinking soul is left, save one dark path
To unappointed death ? I thank thee, Heaven,
Thou sparest me this trial ! Love hath still
With proud esteem held equal sway : in peace,
Untroubled they divide their several empire.——
But I must hence ; Beatrice I would greet
First with these tidings of Hermione.

[Exit.

SCENE II.

A Hall in the House of Ridolfi.

Enter Servants, preparing for an Entertainment.

ROLAND.

Help me with this wine, Stephano.

STEPHANO.

Help thee? yea, my wishes be thy help. I hope thou wilt have unhelped speed.

ROLAND.

Truce to thy wit, comrade, for it helpeth me not, save an' my fingers to this cudgel, and thine hide to a basting.

STEPHANO.

Nay, spare thy wit, and thy cudgel to boot: mine hide endureth it not tenderly. If I should wince, thou mightest come to harm. A dainty flagon this: would that thy mouth were as dry as my lips, and our bellies had changed occupants! Thy lazy body would be lighter, methinks, and I better able to carry thee.—

ROLAND.

The Lady Hermione! Oh, how I do love her sweet face, Stephano! She smiles an' it were so temptingly when she speaks! "Good Roland," says she, "give me of that wine."—"Kind Roland, do go to the bath, and carry my little spaniel:"—or thus, "Honest master Roland, pray take my basket, and bring me thy master's garden mittens." This house, I trow, Stephano, she makes like to some gay palace, when she visits it; as pleasant and full of goodness as the Duke's pantry, who comes to the feast to-day. She was here

some two years ago, and I thought I should have pined away at heart when she left.

STEPHANO.

Tush! thou star-stricken marmoset! Is she not a woman? Are not all women as full of deceit as their grandmothers? Is not Eve's flesh upon the bones of the very best jade in christendom? and this blowzy-bell of thine, beshrew me, has no better a covering than the rest of 'em. This dainty hoyden thou delightest to worship, man, can be as chary of her winning looks as any of her sisterhood; and if I have not seen a storm brewing in her face, I have seen a water-spout in her eye, marry, which is almost fathomless. Mark me, Roland; if any good comes of her mummery, I am no true prophet, that's all.

ROLAND.

Envious in this, I do guess, Stephano. Why does she not smile on thee—eh? Thy stupid face, seamed like a beggar's coat; thy marvellous bright eyes and small nostrils; or, mayhap, I might the rather mean, thy marvellous bright nostrils and small eyes, make tears come into her delicate organs by sympathy, like the stroke of a dull razor. I tell thee, man, she cannot smile fronting thy mis-shapened countenance. I know many gentlewomen that bear not an ugly serving-man about them; and the delicate Hermione, I should bethink me, hath aversion to such.—I like her the better, Stephano, for thine ugliness.

STEPHANO.

Thou mis-shapen cur, time serves not to correct thee. What! dost brag if thy grinning leer provoke her mirth? "Sweet Roland," ah, "good Roland," put thy nose to the curling irons, and twist thy mouth with thy garters. I can tell thee, "Master Roland," this favourite hath her privy

counsellors, and she not a wit loth to trust 'em. Ah, ah! "honest Roland," perhaps thou didst help her to the terrace key o' yesternight; and it was "kind Roland, fetch me" — oh, her pretty spaniel was it, "Master Roland?"

ROLAND.

Nay, thou art in jest. Sawest thou the Lady Hermione with the key last night?

STEPHANO.

I heard a noise in the gallery, and I jumped hastily from my mattress, and who should I see but Hermione, with her chamber-lamp, opening the door which leads to the garden terrace. What sayest thou, Roland?

RONALD.

The key I fetched not.

STEPHANO.

Then, it seems, she lacks not other "honest" friends for matters of more need, and they in nothing loth to serve her.

RONALD.

Didst thou watch her further?

STEPHANO.

Ay, good Roland, or I do not deserve to know the worth of a pretty secret.

ROLAND.

Well? —

STEPHANO.

Thou art curious, i' faith. What makes thee look so wistful?

ROLAND.

Come, thou lucky knave, I want the burden of thy song. How sped she?

STEPHANO.

I hied me to the topmost lattice, overlooking —

RONALD.

Who was the gallant ?

STEPHANO.

Why truly he had a brighter face than thine own, but shorn off somewhat from the left cheek.

ROLAND.

Thou speakest parables, Stephano. Out with it, friend : a secret cometh to no good if kept in thy stomach.

STEPHANO.

A fair face ; eyes, mouth, and nose, though none of the best ; — I think not half so well made as mine own.

ROLAND.

In troth, a dainty lover. What more ?

STEPHANO.

But then she gave him such a look of devotion, it would have done thine heart good to have watched the turn of her face, and to have looked at the glistening of her eye, — and yet this platter-faced gallant seemed all unmoved.

ROLAND.

His name knowest thou ?

STEPHANO.

Verily, he hath many titles, and I should be puzzled to suit my respect with his proper quality, should we meet.

ROLAND.

I'll watch to-night ; — but pr'ythee whisper me his name gently ; I am not quick at solving a riddle.

STEPHANO.

Nay, nay; watch and satisfy thine own prying fancy, as I have mine. If she walks to-night I'll call thee. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*A Chamber in Ridolfi's House.*HERMIONE, *sitting at a Table.*

HERMIONE.

Two years ago—this self-same chamber—
Just as 'twas wont;—that ebony casket—still
Yon little crucifix hung o'er the mirror,—
That plaited riband, on its flower-carved pillars,
I wore in sport for love's fair guerdon;
Its chequer'd noose I vow'd to cast on him
Who caught me first in some wild reckless game
Of wanton mirth; but none, as I remember,
The adventure gain'd,—it hangs unclaim'd still.
But why this heaviness?—as if some secret,
Some long-forgotten grief, waked from its slumber,
Roused at the voice of these loud recollections.
Ah! dread dissembler! once I thought thee dead,
And thou but slept! Away! haunt not my spirit!
Is it thy form, fell demon? Hence!—thy strength
Is nurtured but with present loneliness,
And on the wings of some reviving thought
Admittance hast thou gain'd to mock me.

[*Knocking without.*]

Who knocks?—

BLANCH.

'Tis time, lady, you adorn for the guests. The Duke sends

word he will attend, and with it his gracious love to Hermione. This billet greets you with his welcome.

HERMIONE.

A billet!—Welcome!—Stay.
Thou shalt attire me in some simple garb,
Some unassuming robe; its modest hue
Unnoticed, I can there observe
The humours of this feast.

BLANCH.

Your crimson bodice, lady, becomes you best, and your lilac kerchief with the blue purple—or do you choose your orange tiffany dress, and your coif and farthingale?

HERMIONE.

Neither, good Blanch. Where is mine old spotted robe, with the silk sleeves and violet-flowered stomacher?

BLANCH.

Lady, what unlucky accident should bethink you of the garment? I fear your memory is but indifferently served. Once, my kind mistress, you gave it to me: and I remember well I said the dress was too gay, when straight you replied, with a sigh (and I do always grieve to hear you sigh, lady), "Take it, good Blanch; I wear it not again:" which I the more marvelled at, being, as you remember, made up for your last visit to Mantua, nor did you inquire for it, after you left this gay city; but methinks none other serves you so well for this same soft-air'd clime. I will away for it speedily, right glad, I trow, the roguish pedler hath not fetched it, who gathers the cast-off dresses from your house. I have not worn the apparel, lady.

HERMIONE.

Thou art a kind-hearted gossip. Choose thee the best

suit from my clothes-press, and take it for the exchange.—
Nay, good Blanch, I allow not thy gainsay:—it will, perad-
venture, help thee to a husband.

BLANCH.

I will but keep it then, my sweet mistress, to answer at
your bidding; mayhap, you will fancy it on your wedding-
day.

HERMIONE.

I shall need no garment then, but the one thy grand-
mother wore when she scared thy father in the forest.

BLANCH.

Save you, my lady! mean you her winding-sheet?

HERMIONE.

I mean mine own, Blanch; hers being worn out, belike,
ere now, with much travel.

BLANCH.

Oh, mercy!—but you are ever at a jest.

HERMIONE.

Nay, girl, my spirits are too heavy.

BLANCH.

What mean you, fair mistress? I do fear me a few hours
of this Mantuan air have wrought untowardly with you.
Are you ill, lady?

HERMIONE.

No, girl.

BLANCH.

It is a secret that disturbs you?

HERMIONE.

Thou canst sing, Blanch?—

BLANCH.

Ay, sweet lady, that can I,—and your favourite carol too.
List. [Sings.

“The miller was blithe in the red, red morn.
And he sung ere the lark left her nest;
His heart was bright as the gold, gold light
That comes o’er the dappled east.”

HERMIONE.

Nay, that sorts not with my humour, Blanch.

BLANCH.

Shall I try the merry troll you were always right glad to
hear, which the old steward taught us?

“Roundabout, roundabout, laugh and glee
So merry, so merry —”

HERMIONE.

Stay :—not now :—some other song, and we’ll in to the
toilet : let it be brief—I know not why,—save that I think
thy singing hath not now such a jocund and mirthful spirit
in it.

BLANCH.

Ah, lady !—but strange purposes are i’ the wind when the
mirth-giving Hermione becometh a lover of lamentable
ditties !—Stay, shall it be of love ?—a sleepy tale of love, as
you were wont to call it ?—I know a ballad of this hue.

HERMIONE.

I care not : another, it may be, would have chimed better.
Yet, I’ll hear thee as a babbler of strange stories.

BLANCH (*sings*).

“Up with the light,
My maiden bright,
The thrush twitters on the tree;
Each merry, merry bird to his mate doth call,
And the bridal waits for thee!

“The sunbeams pass
On the dew-spread grass,
And gold gleams are in the sky;
The morn’s balmy breeze to thy casement hies,
And thy bridegroom is waiting for thee.”

The lover spake,
“Fair maid, awake,”
Yet the maiden still she slept!
“Why tarries she from me?—thy bonny face I’ll see,”
And lightly to her window he leapt.

One cry he gave,
Then still as the grave
In dim horror he fix’d his dark eye;
For there his lady bright slept her long, long changeless
night,
And a blood-sprinkled corpse welter’d nigh!

BLANCH.

How like you the song?

HERMIONE.

Indifferent well;—methinks it were too sad. But sadness and I must have closer fellowship ere long, or I mistake the note of her approach. Away, Blanch; we must not delay the honours of the feast. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

*An Inn at Mantua.**Enter BERTRAND and CARLOS, fatigued with travel.*

BERTRAND.

'Tis well, good Carlos, in this noble city,
Thanks to all proper instruments, we now
Enter safe housed. Nay, nay, dole-stricken friend,
Put off these looks, drench'd still in woe. Why, man,
Love ne'er was waked with weeping ; woman's eye
E'er kept her heart, and thou must henceforth bribe
With gayer looks that restless twinkling organ,
Ere thou may'st gain admittance to her breast.
Rouse thee ! — Accost her thus, with careless look
And laughing eye ; — bid her " good day ; " —
Wring her fair hand ; and if withdrawn,
Why seize her by the waist : her sullen looks
Heed not ; an' if she chide, toss back her words ; —
Let her not learn from thy woe-tinctured face,
Ere yet the tremulous voice its utterance shape,
Thou pinest a love-sick fool ! —

CARLOS.

Bertrand, forbear.

Thou speakest like to one whose lofty spirit
Love hath not quell'd. I cannot now th' oppressor
Lift from my soul ; I am bow'd down, — subdued, —
Crush'd even to earth, — yet crawling heavily,
A cumbrous burden, wearied, useless here,
And without purport to my fellow-men ! —
I seem aloof from all connexion, tie,
Or kindred with mankind. The very earth,

My parent dust, claims not its fellowship
With mine ! Would that yon chill and rayless dwelling
Had shut me out, and all mine hated sorrow,
Far from the gaze, the cold, unpitying gaze,
Alike of stranger and of friend !
Soon shall the darkness cover me, — the tomb
Close mine account for ever. Then shall I rest ; —
No glance of cool-eyed scorn shall meet me there,
Nor woman's charm'd and traitorous tongue shall mock me.
They seek not victims i' the grave ! — My grief
Shall there be spent ; the heart's last ebbing throe
To earth in quiet nothingness shall leave me,
Loosed from my dungeon and my chain ! —

BERTRAND.

Carlos,

Thy troubled spirit hath no appetite
For aught but evil. Fancy, diseased,
Shapeth its wrongs from what itself doth breed, —
E'en as the timid and belated hind
From out his spectre-haunted brain brings forth
The shadow most he fears. — I do not mock thee ;
Cold scorn lurks not i' the same laughing orbit
Of an unfraudulent eye. Thou know'st it well,
Thy peace alone I've sought ; and this coy dame,
Woo'd as mine hopes commend, would free my bosom
From half its load. For these remediless griefs
With equal weight oppress mine anguish'd spirit,
As the united woe this breast e'er smote,
The sum untold of this world's misery.

CARLOS.

Forgive a wayward tongue, fretful — unkind :
My breaking heart still holds thee dear.

BERTRAND.

Forgive! —

Nay, ask not this ;— man asks but favours.
What waits our bolder claim we crave not. Hold !—
'Tis needful we devise, touching our errand,
Some scheme for its adventure. Shrewd my guess,
Thou would'st e'en now return, unwoo'd, unsought
This dainty maiden, and to others leave
The fond pursuit, then lay thee down and weep !
I've led thee hither, Carlos ; — here I vow,
Ere this same gallant city hath disgorged
Such useless habitants, to her dull ear
Thou shalt commend thy love.

CARLOS.

I've penn'd a fragrant billet —

BERTRAND.

Or a sonnet,

Mayhap, unto her eyne. Nay, 'tis not thus
Her fickle love is caught : — canst find no speech ?
'Tis said love 's eloquent, and pleadeth nobly,
Using such vehement passion as doth rouse
The listening heart. Pour thy whole soul to hers :
Give her no space for thought — 'twill bring resistance.
Reflection's chill and polish'd surface soon
Would glance off thine artillery, rolling back
The warm flood to thine heart. But I forbear : —
My wish is ever foremost on my tongue,
And still outstrips thy power ! Well, thou canst sing,
Play on the cittern, trill the soft-voiced lute
Beneath a lady's chamber ; thou canst fill
A delicate ear with ditties framed so deftly,
And with such wondrous skill, another's woe
Shall seem thine own. 'Tis said, in that soft hour

The maiden's heart is tender, and well nurtured
To cherish love's impressions. Then, I tell thee,
Unask'd attend, and with some vagrant band
Of hired melodists, at once discourse,
To thine heart's easing, of pale woe, sighs, groans,
And love forsaken. Thus prepared, her thought
Will wondering turn to her moon-driven warbler.
Thou knowest well in woman's restless soul
A lurking fondness lies for mystery.
If thou but win her thought to some connexion,
Some yet scarce-felt recurrence with thine own,
And pleasure once associate with the thought—
These outworks gain'd, cheer thee, thou gloomy knight ;
The lady shall be won. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.

*The Terrace. Moonlight.**Enter HERMIONE.*

HERMIONE.

Calm orb, how tranquil is thy path !—
Amid the stars thou walkest, clad in light
As with a garment. Still thy borrow'd robe
The darkness compasseth, and sullen night
His cloud-spread visage cleareth at thy beam.—
How calm on yonder stream the moonlight sleeps !
Fair image, woman, of thy maiden breast,
Unmoved by love. Anon, some vagrant breath
Ruffles its surface, and its pure still light
In tremulous pulses heaves : — brighter, perchance,
That feverish glitter, but its rest is o'er ! —

How fresh the dewy air falls on my cheek,
 As if some spirit, clothed in its influence, came
 Upon my soul, with one heaven-given drop,
 To cool its torment! Would that I could bind
 Thine incorporeal essence! I would chain thee
 Here! — on my heart! Benevolent visitor,
 Whether from yon bright sphere to mortals sent,
 On moonbeams gliding, — fairy gnome or sylph,
 Whate'er thy name; — or from earth's glistening caves,
 Or from the forest-corall'd deep thou comest,
 In these chill drops that stud my dew-deck'd hair,
 Its every braid impearling: — fly me not,
 I charge thee, gentle spirit! — Hark! he comes!
[*Music at a distance.*

I thank thee ——

*[The sound gradually approaches, until heard
 apparently from beneath the Terrace.*

A voice! — I'll hear thy words. Breathe not too loud,
 Ye winds. —

SONG.

Lady, list to me!
 Thy gentle spirit I'll be;
 The fire is my garment, the flood is my bed,
 And I paint the first cloud with the sunbeam red
 That rolls o'er the broad blue sea.

Lady, list to me!
 To the mountain-top I flee:
 There I watch the first wave that comes laden with light,
 And its soft hue I spread o'er each billow so bright,
 With its beam I enkindle each heaven-peering height,
 And the morn's radiant canopy. —

[The voice ceases, and the music slowly retires.

HERMIONE.

Oh fly not! — bear me on thy wing! — from earth —
From —— Why this shudder? — Save me, spirit of air,
Or earth, or sea! Tear me but hence; and yet
I cannot part. Oh! why in mercy once
Was I conceived, and not to nothing crush'd
Ere the first feeble pulse, unconscious life,
Crept through this viewless form? — Why was I kept
Unharm'd through infinite perils? — spared, yet doom'd
To writhe unpitied — succourless — alone,
Beneath one cruel, one remorseless woe, —
From hope shut out — from common sympathy,
And all communion of sorrow, — e'en
To the veriest wretch upon thy bosom earth
Ne'er yet denied? — This boon I dare not ask:
Wither'd, consumed, companionless, unwept,
I meet mine hastening doom. Yet, clad in smiles,
A flower-wreathed sacrifice, I gaily bound,
With gambols playful as the innocent lamb,
To the devouring altar. The knife is bared! —
Uplifted, — glittering! Yet I woo thee, tyrant,
And madly kiss my chain. This night the feast
I left; — arm'd, I had proudly thought — vain hope!
With such resolve as, on this moonlit terrace,
Where, freed awhile from earth's disquietude,
My thrall'd heart might here unchain for ever! —

[*Takes a billet from her bosom.*

I vow'd to snatch thee from my breast!
To tear thee hence! and to the winds, unseen,
Commit thy perishing fragments, e'en as now
This unoffending page I rend, far scattering
Its frail memorial to the air. —

[*Makes an effort to tear the paper.*

Some power withholds me. What! for this thou yearnest?
Weak, foolish heart, some other hour, thou say'st,
Better thou canst resign this fluttering relic
Of thy —— hope, whisperest thou?
Nay, folly — madness, — call it but aright,
Thou throbbing fool, and I will give thee back
Thy doted bauble. *[Returns it into her bosom.*

There — there! — watch over it!
Brood on thy minion! — cherish and pamper it
Until it mock thee! — prey on thy young blood, —
Poison each spring of natural affection,
And all the sympathies that flesh inherits, —
Then wilt thou curse thine idol! — Impotent rage, —
It will deride thee, and will fiercely cling
To thine undoing for ever. Fare thee well,
Thou star-hung canopy! — far-smiling orb,
Farewell! No more sweet influences ye fling,
As ye were wont, around my desolate heart;
I cannot bear your stillness: — Earthquake — storm —
The mighty war of the vex'd elements,
Would best comport with my disquiet: — now,
On thy calm face I dare not look again! *[Exit.*

Enter ROLAND and STEPHANO.

STEPHANO.

So, so, my moon-eyed maiden. Ah, "Good Roland,"
gallants breed not i' the sun; they thrive best belike i' the
moonbeams.

ROLAND.

I saw no gallant.

STEPHANO.

Why, poor wretch, I pity thee. Perhaps she hath fallen
sick for the moon; thou seest his cheek is somewhat shorn

off, and I verily think he favours the lover that I told thee of.

ROLAND.

Thou art an old and a wicked rogue. But what waked such pleasant music? Came that from the moon too?

STEPHANO.

Ah, ah, honest friend, dost thou breed suspicions? — Ask the gardener who brought the music-men so late under the garden terrace.

Enter LAURA cautiously, carrying a light.

LAURA.

How now, masters, wot ye, — a pretty time o' night for secret whisperings! What brings you to the terrace, worthy sirs, so nigh upon midnight? Pleasant discourse truly, you unseasonable villains! Can't you stay a-bed?

ROLAND.

Sweet mistress, we came to hear the music.

LAURA.

And what should lug your dainty ears to the serenade? — I' faith, 'tis high time for your betters to stop their ears, when asses jog to the pipe. So, you guessed the music came to benefit your private discourse. An excellent jest this! — a serenade to a couple of owls. — Get in, you lazy dolts, and thank your stars, and not your ears, that you have 'scaped a beating. — [*Exeunt ROLAND and STEPHANO.*] — I wonder these idiots guessed not who drew the serenade to this long-deserted house. True it may be some dozen years or more since this same salute awoke me; nevertheless, I was not past hope of its return. That gallant stranger whom I saw at vespers yesterday eyed me not, nor did he watch the corner of the street, for nought. — Well, it

is a noble-looking cavalier, and a steady, well-ordered person, I warrant, from his noticing me so properly, and not that giddy cox of mine, the love-unheeding Hermione. — I hope he will return. Virgin decorum permitteth not my regard to his first appearance. — Hark ! — [Music.] — Oh ! how my heart flutters ! Sweet harbinger of love ! I must show myself, or he will die of despair, or, perchance, he will not come again, which will suit me still worse. Though, certes, it would be mightily amusing to feel oneself the cause of a gay cavalier hanging himself in his garters ! What a precious revenge for the many slights we maidens are subject to ! And then, to have it said, “there goes the signora for whom signor so and so hanged himself.” Oh, how charming is this moonlight ! Really, I am younger to-night than when I was but one year past thirty. Hush ! — ay, I warrant thou art in love ; — I can tell by the turn of thy voice. Senor Antonio quavered just as thou dost ; — but — he was fickle, and quavered so far he could not get back again. I never saw him again after his second sky alto ! — Hark !

SONG.

Fair as the moonbeam,
 Bright as the running stream,
 Sparkling, yet cold.
 In Love's tiny fingers
 A shaft yet there lingers,
 And he creeps near thy bosom and smiles, lady.
 Soon his soft wings will cherish
 A flame round thine heart,
 And, ere it may perish,
 Thy peace shall depart.
 O listen, listen, lady gay,
 Love doth not always sue ;
 The brightest flame will oft decay,
 The fondest lover rue, lady !

LAURA.

I cannot resist.

[She waves her hand over the Terrace. A letter is thrown—she takes it to the lamp, and reads—

“ Say, fairest, canst thou love? or doth cold scorn compose the sum of thy affections? Can thine eyes enkindle so suddenly another’s heart, and yet shed no warmth on thine own? Give me but one smile, and thou shalt frown upon me for ever: so shall that cheering beam outlive a thousand dark winters. I am grown bold, for I have but a simple tale, and if thou wilt lend an ear to my suit, on the Terrace, to-morrow night at this hour, my presence will not offend thee again unless thou judgest in my favour.

“ CARLOS.”

So, so,—rather a bold gallant I trow, seeing it is the first he hath asked of my company; but I guess it is the fashion of these perilous days. Peradventure, if I had not been before-time so careful of my favours, I had been woo’d and wedded with the best of ’em. After all, I see no great harm in the company of a handsome young spark, save that the uncourted dames are envious withal! but verily they would change their minds mayhap as I do, though every one doth not judge so charitably as the person who hath chanced to ride on the other side of his opinion. I scolded the maids though but yesterday for a night frolic with their sweethearts, and bravely will Hermione laugh at my sermon, with the practice thereto appended. Well, I care not — “let those laugh that get the magpie’s nest.”—When I am married, grin who dare;—Carlos, I meet thee!

[Exit.

ACT II. — SCENE I.

*The Duke's Chamber.**Enter DUKE.*

DUKE.

A strange conceit: — where dwellest thou,
And on what nurtured?—Love on air-fed dreams
Yet lives not: if in the heart nor hope there be,
Nor thought, nor token'd glimpse on which to cling
For daily sustenance, the recreant dies.—
Repliest thou?—What, nought my monitor?—
Nay, thou didst rise unbidden on my path,
With threatening front, and sternly stalked thee forth
From out thy covert, sent, forsooth, as though
To warn of menaced danger. Back to thy den!
Dream there of mischief and invent new terrors;
I yet can jest, laugh with the laughing dames,
Sport in their transient blaze, unharm'd, uncensured,
And ever to thy fond embrace return,
Beatrice, thence more wedded to thine heart!
In quiet cease thine oft foreboding ill,
Nor with unreal fears haunt my repose,
Lest when thou shouldst arouse, erewhile to rush
Betwixt me and my purpose, thine alarms
I heed not, if so oft thy drivelling fancies
Arise to fool me! —

Enter an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

My Lord, the Lady Hermione visits you to-day.

DUKE.

My pages—are they summoned?

ATTENDANT.

Fabian waits below, in the great hall, just equipped for the chase.

DUKE.

Let him attend.

[*Exit ATTENDANT.*]

The tongue of that gay damsel in mine ear
Yet rings. I like her wit well, she doth sport
These humours nobly. Words from her charmed lips
Do gather sweetness, and the sharpest taunt
Falls from her harmless, veil'd in the soft tones
Of her most delicate voice. And yet her presence
I would not seek; a lurking mystery
Hangs, or my thought deceives me, fathomless,
Inscrutable, and dazzling as the veil
That quells th' intruder's gaze. I watch'd her eye
In secret yesternight, amid the feast;
The soul that sate there laugh'd not, but her face
With radiant smiles was sprinkled, dimpling o'er
Like the soft waves on summer seas, with such
Smooth, gentle undulation. Yet her eye
Ne'er rose nor fell, but fix'd as some stern rock
Amid that smiling wave. I like not this —
There's witchery in that glance."

Enter FABIAN.

Bring here my tablets, boy:—how goes the news?

FABIAN.

Your grace, perchance, hath heard two gentle strangers
The abode inquiring of Hermione.
Beneath Ridolfi's terrace, yesternight,

Unto her ear they gave, with pipe and lute,
Sweet signal of their presence.

DUKE.

Where?—the terrace!—
I'll have them seiz'd. Ho!—guards!

Enter Guard.

FABIAN.

Oh, stay!—why thus, my lord!—
The men purpose no mischief, hither bent
On some love errand; they in this can plot
None other hurt.

DUKE.

Love! sayest thou?—Whom seek they?—

FABIAN.

Hermione, my lord, and she——

DUKE.

Admits their coming?—Seize them, guards!—
Why this delay?

GUARD.

My lord, we know not where
Your message hath its reference.

DUKE.

Where lurk the caitiffs, boy?

FABIAN.

Alas! alas! some frenzy masters you:
One moment wait, one precious moment, ere
Upon the spotless robe of your fair justice
Fall this abhorred stain. Pause, I beseech you,

[*The DUKE motions the Guards to withdraw.*

'Tis for yourself I plead!

[*Kneels.*

DUKE.

Up, boy!—what ails thee? Knowest thou, Fabian,
Of these intruders?—Speak!

FABIAN.

I know them not.

DUKE.

Then why such ready zeal in their good service?

FABIAN.

My lord, the zeal I now profess
Seeks but your own. To strangers, courtesy,—
And faith reciprocal, demands protection.
This need I tell to Andrea!
Whose name with purest honour coupled, grew
Into its likeness, till the very words
Had but one sense. Need I to Andrea
Interpret honour's laws? its high-born chivalry,
In whose once noble breast her temple rose
Unsullied, unapproach'd by aught of earth,
To which defilement clung. Think but on this—
One moment on the past now gaze—'tis bright!
Oh let not one dark cloud, gathering but yet
Upon the whirlwind of this turbulent passion,
Obscure yon sunny glade, where stilly winds
'Mid verdant hills, calm waters, glittering plains,
The beamy path of an unclouded life,—
At one fell sweep, let not this merciless blast
O'erwhelm its wonted pride!

Enter DUCHESS.

BEATRICE.

Your presence, Andrea, I crave
To greet our visitors.

DUKE.

Not now, Beatrice,—
I cannot come. Where sayest thou? —

BEATRICE.

My lord! you are disturb'd!
What! — Fabian, and in tears! — Why this reproof?
The boy is gentle, and ill brooks harsh words;
You were not wont to chide him thus!

DUKE.

'Tis Fabian, I ween, his master chiding.
'Twas thus: — Two prying and suspicious elves
I mark'd, to punish. Issuing forth command
For their arrest, this silly, wayward boy,
With words and tears, hath temper'd mine intent
To his entreaty. True, I might but gain
Small honour by their seizure, hence I've given
The stripling his desire; yet mark me, Fabian,—
I watch them closely.——

Enter HERMIONE and LAURA.

My soul seems pain'd at her approach. [Aside.
My gentle cousins, hail! None other name
Wherewith I greet you sounds so consonant,
So kin to mine affection. How hath fared
Each friend in Mantua? Laura, yet as fresh
As when my childhood knew thee, and thine hand
Supplied a mother's fondness. Look not grave,
Thou art not half so old as thou art aged
In mine esteem.—Hermione, to you
I publish greeting.

HERMIONE.

Our beloved cousin,—
The form I trow your greeting takes.

DUKE.

Sweet coz !

No form I use, I greet thee well, and crave
Thy long abode in Mantua. Ladies' eyes
Have most miraculous virtue ; they can draw
The moon from his orbit, and the little stars
To watch their tender sighs at the soft wail
Breath'd from a timorous lute. You love the moonlight ?
Why do ye start ?—'tis not the first fair dame
That in our city listen'd i' the cool
And passionless night, to piped sighs, and vows
Enamour'd, breathed from reed and flageolet !

HERMIONE.

Mean you the serenade ? 'Twas meant, my lord,
For other ears than mine.

DUKE.

How ? For the maid's, belike ! Sweet, innocent fool,
Love e'er was held a story-telling urchin ;
Pr'ythee forswear such idle company.
But whence upon that cheek such tell-tale hues,
Wrought suddenly in their bright texture ? — whence
That strange confusion ? Love's unquenched flame
Defies control.

HERMIONE.

I do confess, — one night,
To while a feverish hour, — I had walk'd forth, —
I sought the garden-terrace. True, surprise
A moment cross'd me, when your ear I found
Such marvellous tidings heard !

DUKE.

Well, to the maids
'Tis like we are beholden for this minstrelsy.
Nought living now in that good house would tempt
Our gallants from their beds.

LAURA.

And why, your grace?
If older ears enjoy such ravishment,
I'm not so old, beshrew me, potent Duke,
But I can wake at true-love's bidding!

DUKE.

Well said,
My maiden-queen! The fire of Zampria's house
Yet quenches not, nor through thy cooler veins
Flags in its current.

HERMIONE.

Yesternight
She sought my chamber. I had left the terrace
Ere the unyielding maid answer'd her call;
She came all radiant with love's virgin fire,
She trod on air, and her quick-throbbing bosom
All o'er the god confess'd. What says our cousin?

LAURA.

No need that maiden's blush reveal her secret,
If such rude, giddy, and discretionless tongues
Are left abroad.

HERMIONE.

Nay, Laura, thou hast lived
But in that snowy page, so prettily crimp'd,
O'er which, thou sayest, love whilom hath brush'd
His tiny wings, and deftly to thine heart

From thence hath sprung. Ah! gentle maid! in mercy
Vouchsafe to me one touch,—one thrilling touch
Of that same love-wrought billet,—haply, thence
The god may come: I'll make the urchin room;
Or some stray rubbish, hoarded, yet to me
As worthless, I'll remove.

LAURA.

So fair a jewel,
To thy rude hand I yield not.

DUKE.

Excellent maid!
Thy jewel I had thought would hence have pass'd,
A legacy to earth. I'd give my cap
To view this comely gallant.—So, to thee,
Hermione, hath love ne'er yet approach'd,—
Or, if perchance he came, 'twas clad in guise
Of other import. If on thy chill bosom,
Smiling, he yet should nestle, archly pouting
His pretty lip for entrance, wouldst thou grant
The wanderer room?

HERMIONE.

I know not:—now, mayhap,
'Tis not much worth his lodging.

DUKE.

Then its chambers
Are still defil'd with many visitors.
Or, it may chance, some envious power usurps
His lawful birthright. Rid thee of such guest,—
To thy liege lord submit, and pardon crave
For past offences.

HERMIONE.

Where shall I begin

My maiden suit?

DUKE.

Lay but that garb aside,
That glittering panoply, its surface, bright,
Yet harder than the thrice-quench'd steel,
No bolt can pierce; and I do promise thee
A hundred shafts from some well-furnish'd quiver.

HERMIONE.

But if those shafts are pointless and unfledg'd,
A hundred more would boot not!
Of what avail, though twice ten thousand fell
Unspeeding at my feet!

DUKE.

Thy fickle fancy,
Yet unfetter'd, will not always thus,
Gay as the light breeze, rove where'er she list,
Nor heeding ought she passes. She will droop,
And, sighing, linger o'er some cherish'd form,
Enamour'd while she worships.

HERMIONE.

Mine roves not!

One form I cherish! None I wot beside
Comes forth at fancy's call. 'Tis not mine own!

DUKE.

Thou'speakest riddles.

HERMIONE.

And must ever thus.

Whate'er on this dark theme I could reveal

Were mystery still, trackless, inscrutable.
The subtle web in which my fate is bound
Time serves not to unravel: all beside
Basks in the broad moonlight. All hopes, desires,
Each changing hue, as cloud or sunshine sweeps
Their varied surface, pass without concealment
Before the eye of watchful day. —

BEATRICE.

And every maid hath some fond secret,
Some stored love, that she unwilling keeps
Until claim'd thence for its blest owner. Why
That face of solemn mystery brought forth,
As if thine own were some peculiar fate
None ever knew?

HERMIONE.

Our light burden galls
More than the heaviest load our neighbours bear.
But we return. The day unwitting slides
Adown the cope of yon bright heaven. Few hours
Yet come till eve, and Laura looks impatient.
And wherefore thus, bright cousin?—no sly meeting,
No time-drawn assignation? Well I know
The disrespect thou bearest them, or now
My thoughts would judge thee!

DUKE.

Guard well your giddy charge,
Most vigilant dame, most excellent duenna,
Lest some gay treacherous gallant should beguile
Her tender years. Farewell.

LAURA.

I thank your duteous care. Farewell.

[*Exeunt* HERMIONE and LAURA, followed by the
DUCHESS.]

DUKE.

A strange wrought mixture thou
Of our mortality ; mingled, perchance,
By nature in some freakish mood, when tired
Of that same endless reproduction, man,—
Still to his fellow mortal answering,
As, in a mirror, face to face.

FABIAN.

Go you, my lord, to-day, upon the Prado?

DUKE.

To-day?—yes, boy. But I would change this habit,
And mix unknown with that gay crowd. 'Tis well—
Hermione, or strange my thoughts misgive me,
Now seeks the walk. I'll watch ; this paramour
Or hers or Laura's I may chance discover.

[*Exeunt separately.*]

SCENE II.

A Street.

Enter CARLOS and BERTRAND.

BERTRAND.

Thou speedest well, thanks to my shrewd invention.
Yon babbling rogue, Stephano, gave me note
Of her night walk upon the terrace, where
I bribed the keeper to admit ye.

CARLOS.

Thanks,
Thrice worthy friend. But I do fear mine errand ;

Some secret terror burdens mine intent,
And heavily droops the wing of my firm purpose.
Dull hope's uncertain beam, foreboding, quivers,
While the rude blast, low howling in mine ear
The roar of muttering tempests, sweeps it by,
And, in that flickering glare, pale spectres glide,
A mournful train, — sullen despair, pale woe,
And grisly terror, dwell in their pale looks.
Would this dread night were o'er !

BERTRAND.

Some rancorous fiend
Possesses thee. Some stroke of sudden madness
To thy weak brain hath sped, reversed thy thoughts,
Turn'd each unto its contrary, — what once
Waked smiling hope, now brings despair, — love, hate ! —
Joy, measureless sorrow ! — Rouse thee ! Once thou wert
Of different mood, and, ere thy clouded sun
Sinks to his gloomy bed, again his glance
Shall be unveil'd. I'll be thy prophet ! Haste
From this inglorious sleep ! As he of old,
Thy fetters from thee shake, in terrible might
Uprising, when awaked from the soft lap
Of indolent love. Thou lovest but too well,
Nor mayest thou speed, until she find thee oft,
With careless port, braving her frown. Wayward,
The maiden scorns true lover's tenderest sigh,
And inward pines for some ungracious churl,
Who slights such light-won favours. 'Tis the good
We might possess we loath and sicken at,
For that beyond our reach, we moan and fret,
As if our very soul were thither urged,
And life itself but hung on its frail tenure.
We'll seek the public walk : (woman e'er follows
The giddy crowd, as doth your swift-winged hornet

Hunt forth its prey): it will beguile the hours,
Till night, with drowsy tongue, calls thee to love
And to Hermione!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A Chamber.

Enter LAURA.

LAURA.

How this little tyrant rules it over me! Again—
[*Takes a letter from her bosom*—I can repeat the words
backwards, tell every turn of a letter, count the dots, blurs,
and crossings; but—[*In attempting to replace the billet, it
drops on the floor unperceived*]—I think the sun creeps
backward, and then returns, out of sheer spite and malicious-
ness. I must not be on the terrace too soon: I'll have him
wait now; it looks more as if I had other busi-
ness by the nose than dancing to the pipe of a gay gallant.
Three full hours yet. Alack, alack! I can neither scold the
maids, darn the Venice lace, sort my brother's hose, nor even
turn up the plaitings of my own hair. I'll bethink me of
the gown I must wear that shall best please my cavalier, and
lay it down, to smooth out the folds. Oh, sweet heart! how
tender he looked on me at the Prado to-day. Yes,—the
same,—I gave him an encouraging glance betimes, lest the
youth should wax timorous and melancholy. I hope we
may have a quiet night: the sky looks somewhat wild and
turbid.

[*Exit.*]

Enter HERMIONE.

HERMIONE.

How fierce the sun gazes from below that bank of clouds

he has just quitted, as if he threatened us at his going with some terrible disaster. His beam wraps the city, as with a mantle of fire bespangled with stars, — here and there a glittering cross studding its purple vestment: one by one they are quenched, and the glowing mantle itself fades. A dark dun haze rests upon the city, and in the west a fiery streak alone tells of the past. I fear me the night forebodes a storm. — Carlos, I find, follows me to Mantua. How the moody wretch and his companion dogged us at the Prado to-day: I doubled more than a hare at its last shifts, to keep out of their ken. I had hoped he would have forgotten me ere this; but you may not cram wisdom even down a mallard's throat.—

Enter SYLVIO.

Whose message bring you here?

SYLVIO.

My Lord Duke sends greeting.

HERMIONE.

Thanks, boy, for his intent. I lack not pleasant compliments.

SYLVIO.

He hopes, lady, the air of our public walk suits well your delicate health, and that your spirits droop not in this gay city.

HERMIONE.

Tell my Lord Duke, when he next goes with the crowd, to veil the dark fringe of his eye, and to fashion the bend of his nose afresh; or the fire of his eye, and his lordly beak, will betray to every idle flutterer the presence of the proud Duke of Mantua. Good b'ye, Sylvio.

[Exit.]

SYLVIO.

I cannot read this haughty damsel. Ah! what have we here?— [*Picks up the paper Laura has just dropped.*]— Something, I trow, more legible than maiden's breast.

[*Reads.*

"Say, fairest, canst thou love,"—I warrant thee—"or does cold scorn compose the sum of thine affections"—"Grown bold"—"If thou wilt lend thine ear to my suit on the terrace to-morrow night at this hour"—A bold suitor, truly—"I will not offend thee again unless thou judgest in my favour."

"CARLOS."

Good b'ye, lady.— [*Mimicks her.*]—The Duke shall enjoy this tender morsel. Tell my Lady Hermione, when she next gives a private meeting to her gallant, to keep her billet safe, to veil the fringe of her bodice, and raise the beak of her stomacher, else their shallow covering will betray to every idle flutterer the secrets of the haughtiest beauty in Christendom.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

The Terrace. The night dark and tempestuous, with distant thunder.

Enter CARLOS.

CARLOS.

The night broods heavily, as though
Gaunt mischief were abroad, and its dun cloak
Would hide some horror, the yet timid eye
Shrinks to behold. An hour—a minuted age,
Ere the appointed moment can break in
Upon its tedious march. Hark! footsteps.

I must conceal — this friendly — Ah, Hermione!
Thus anxious for the meeting?

[Steps behind a pillar.

*Enter HERMIONE, with a light; she sets it down at the entrance,
and walks across the Terrace.*

HERMIONE.

Roll on, thou terrible storm, —
On thy dark brow, the lightnings, as they play,
Reveal thy rapid march! —
Spirit of air, that on the untamed winds
Dost walk, or, on the rushing elements
Upborne, thy chariot cleaves the groaning sky, —
Whether to me thou speakest with rude voice
Of unstill'd tempest, or in whispering breath
From morn's flower-fragrant breeze, — I hail thy presence.
Bear in thine hand hot thunder-bolts,
The whirlwind on thy wing, the cloud-swoln cataract
Burst on the reeking earth, — dauntless I'll make
Terror my pastime, sport in their turmoil,
And with the storm-careering demon's shriek
My bitter laugh shall mingle. These are but
The harmless play of innocent childhood, —
So fierce the storm that desolates my soul!

*[CARLOS comes from behind the pillar, and hesi-
tatingly approaches.*

Soft — Who approaches? — How! — Don Carlos!
Whence this intrusion? — Speak not, but begone!
I hear thee not. Touch but my garment,
Shuddering, I'll shake thee off, as some vile reptile
My senses loathe. Hence, ere I spurn thee!

Enter the DUKE hastily, his sword drawn.

DUKE.

Draw, villain! — guard thine hated carcass!
Unsheath, bewildered fool, lest I should spike thee
On this good weapon!

[*They engage.*

HERMIONE.

Help! — How fierce they fight! — Lights!
Ho! — within! —

[*CARLOS falls.*

CARLOS.

Oh, I'm wounded! —

There, may thy paramour complete thy work,
Unblushing traitress! — Home to my heart —
Strike deep! thou canst not give so keen a thrust
As her rude tongue! — Haste, ere thy weapon cool; —
Yet, ere I die, Hermione — I loved thee once,
Now — from my heart I proudly tear thine image,
Blotting it out for ever, as the memory
Of some loathed wanton! — Hence! — haunt not my sight,
Fell murderess! — Now unbar my prison, death! —

DUKE.

Nay, — I'll not haste thee to thy last acquittance,
Ill-fated wretch! — I do repent mine haste.

Enter BERTRAND.

BERTRAND.

Foul deeds betray ye, sirs! — Carlos!
Wounded! — Unhand him, villain! — 'tis to thee
He owes this bitter thrust. If thou art aught

But what I deem thee, by the earliest dawn
Again we meet. The outskirts of yon wood,
Nigh to the city, with thy weapon, there
Uphold thee for this most unjust assault.
An innocent man, if yet protection be
Upon the stranger in proud Mantua,
I bear to his abode; but on thy head
His blood doth rest, a dastard's recreant crow
Down drawing Heaven's hot vengeance!

Enter RIDOLFI, LAURA, and Attendants, with lights.

LAURA.

Oh! they have slain him! Help! Who dealt this blow?
Sweetheart, for love thou diest, and for love,
Malicious fate! thy maiden too must die.

[BERTRAND *bears off* CARLOS.

Yet stay, Carlos! I follow thee.

RIDOLFI.

Nay, maid, content thee;
Thou followest not this stranger.

LAURA.

Oh, he was mine!

But they have ta'en him.

RIDOLFI.

Thine! Some demon sure
Makes ye his sport. My Lord—the Duke—I dream—
This night, methinks, the storm doth send confusion
To men's calm thoughts, o'ermaster'd with its frenzy.
On they would rush, malign, to the fulfilment
Of some sure, unscaped doom.

HERMIONE.

I know not whence

These changes come,—inexplicable, dark
As lies my fate,—the abyss to which I hasten !
My lord, can you unriddle these events ?
Your presence would denote, at least to me,
Some knowledge of their bearing.

DUKE.

A pleasant jest, from me to ask the key !
It hangs in thy bosom, lady. Friends, farewell !
I hasten hence ere this unpitying tempest
Its fiercest burst, its gathering deluge pour ;
Cataracts of forked fire, commingled torrents,
From the wide womb of the vexed elements.

HERMIONE.

Farewell, my lord ! some other time we meet.

DUKE.

Farewell, my friends ! another hour must tell
My purpose here this night.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.—SCENE I.

A Chamber in the Palace.

The Duke at a table, surveying his sword.

DUKE.

Mischievous weapon !

I would forswear thy company : but now

We cannot part. Blameless,—inanimate,—
The heart alone makes thee its passive tool
To work the several ills its thought conceives!
What art thou, senseless steel? cold, motionless,
Incapable of ought, or fraud or injury,—
No dire intent there broods, no passionate flame
Mix'd with thy temper, flashes o'er the obscure,
The restless gulf within, troubling the spirit;
A fitful gleam, on the dark surges wreathing
Forms of unutterable horror,—wide
Disclosing from the womb—the fathomless womb
Of that abyss!—Would the events,
The brief record of time, the narrow space
By yesternight enclosed, were blotted out,
Effaced for ever. I must meet thee, stranger,—
Thou may'st avenge thy friend.—Hermione! —
Why should I start?—a sound—a bursting bubble
Moves me. Hermione!—Again!—This heart
Not so hath leapt in the loud roar of battle!
'Tis folly—madness,—yet she marks me out—
Gazes so strangely,—'twere an idle thought,
But from her soul, methinks, such pulses come
Of wild, unworded passion, as they'd mingle,
Perforce, with every faculty, desire,
And through each avenue rush, thralling the will
Unto its influence. Those basilisk eyes
Are on me ever! Asleep, awake, they change not.
'Tis fascination! If such spell there be,
Hermione doth use it! Yet enchains she not
Others unto the like. I've watch'd her thus,
How angrily,—as the quick lightning sped,
The night uncovering from her form,—I saw
Her eagle-glance the timorous love-sick wretch
Strike helpless at her feet. It is not love,—
A spell earth owns not hangs upon my heart!—

I love Beatrice ; yet more tenderly
Unto her bosom mine affections cling,
The more this parasite, this foul excrescence
Preys on my vitals, wastes mine healthful spirit,
Poisoning life's current even at its source.
I'll shake me from these toils : I knew not when
The cunning net was thrown, so light the texture ;
And warily I wot the snare was laid,
Or I had 'scaped it.

 This unwelcome dawn
Comes dimly on the casement ;—heavily
The day's dull beam seems labouring up the sky,—
Low hang the clouds, huge relics of the storm,
Like dark reflections brooding o'er the mind
When passion's rudest burst hath pass'd, and reason,
As yon pale gleam, thus struggling forth its way
Through adverse clouds, visits again the soul—
'Tis then the mind, shuddering, at once recoils
From the dire consequence, and conjures up
A thousand possibilities to scare
The resolute purpose. I linger at the threshold
Of this proceeding. I will not fight thee, stranger ;
I've wrong'd thy friend. His death, yet unappeased,
Clings to my burden'd spirit : I'll atone
If yet there be of reparation aught
This hand can give. Sylvio !

Enter SYLVIO.

Attend me with the weapons.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

*An unfrequented Place, on the Outskirts of a Wood,
without the Walls.*

Enter BERTRAND and two Attendants.

BERTRAND.

How goes the morn?

FIRST ATTENDANT.

When past the rock,
Methought the convent bell chimed there for matins.
Heard you it, signor?

BERTRAND.

I know not. Is the hour yet gone?

FIRST ATTENDANT.

What hour?

BERTRAND.

Does the day dawn?

SECOND ATTENDANT.

Ay; but night-lurking clouds
Shut out the approaching light. One short, wan streak,
As if in the branches of yon distant oak,
Alone brings niggard tidings.

BERTRAND.

Hark!—footsteps.

FIRST ATTENDANT.

It is the tread
Of some roused deer: upon the rustling leaves
Man's bolder foot falls not so lightly.

BERTRAND.

The day its custom'd hour forgets,
And lingers in its chamber, loth to rise,
With unveil'd face, on the wide ruin
Of this hush'd tempest.

FIRST ATTENDANT.

Look towards the east !
The light breaks rapidly athwart its face.
You look not, signor. Hear you the——

Enter DUKE, disguised.

BERTRAND.

Welcome, if thou art he — the foe I meet.

DUKE.

The same ; but not thy foe.

BERTRAND.

That hated voice !
Revenge it cries. Prepare ! no more delay !
Draw, dastard ! or thy recreant blood I'll pour
Unfought for to this earth.

[BERTRAND *makes the attack, the DUKE keep-
ing on the defensive.*

BERTRAND.

Thou wardest but my blows ; fight, villain !

[*The DUKE makes a parry, and immediately
disarms BERTRAND.*

I seek not mercy. None would I have given
If I had seen thee thus.

DUKE.

Take back thy sword. How fares thy friend ?

BERTRAND.

If he recover, hate to thee, unceasing,
And to Hermione, he **vows** for ever !

DUKE.

Does he recover ?

BERTRAND.

Wherefore askest thou ?

DUKE.

Nay, chafe me not :—passion but slowly sinks
If still the wind buffet the boiling wave !

BERTRAND.

Thou threatenest well. I can defy thy wrath.
Another stroke might change the haughty hue
Of thy proud boast.

FIRST ATTENDANT.

Nay, be at peace—again
Ye may not quarrel. Soft, good signor, sheath
Your perilous weapon. 'Tis not just we wait
Another issue with decided strife.

DUKE.

Farewell !

I would depart while better reason yet
Keeps stedfast watch.

[*Exit.*

BERTRAND.

Cool-hearted wretch !
Thy passion kept not pace with thine occasion,
Else had it minister'd to other issues.
Anger disarm'd me — not thine arm, assassin.

FIRST ATTENDANT.

Yet hath he braved it nobly, and, methinks,
A better name hath earn'd in thy report.

SECOND ATTENDANT.

Knowest thou thy foe ?

BERTRAND.

What need ? His name I wot not.

SECOND ATTENDANT.

The Duke !

BERTRAND.

The Duke ? — of Mantua !

SECOND ATTENDANT.

'Tis he !

A nobler heart beneath a truer breast
Ne'er beat. I watch'd his bearing as he gave
The weapon back to thy reluctant grasp :
'Twas just the air, the lofty temper'd port,
I've seen him use, when, with proud condescension,
Gracious—yet bating nought his dignity,—
He deals such pardon to the trembling culprit
As makes the offence yet doubly heinous.

BERTRAND.

I ask'd of him no favour — where the crime ?
'Twas unprovoked ; he rush'd upon my friend,—
They fought, — he fell, — and I had hoped to avenge
The sufferer's wrong. But whence ?—'tis wondrous strange.
Hermione ! — the Duke ! — the proud Hermione
A prince's paramour ! It cannot be.
So fair, so noble, yet—There's mystery here :
I must unravel this perplexed web,
Or perish in its toils !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A Balcony, overlooking the Garden.

HERMIONE and BLANCH.

HERMIONE.

I am sad, Blanch.

BLANCH.

I would, lady, you were in your little toilet-chamber at Venice. You were not sad there once. Why stay you in this unlucky house? I do conceive, that I shall have no more heart soon than hath your goose-quill, nor life within me than a dried puff-ball. When go you to Venice, lady?

HERMIONE.

Never!

BLANCH.

Oh, sweet mistress; and must we die in this dismal city? My very countenance hath changed its fashion, forsooth; being smoke-dried and tarnished, like your two years' hung stock-fish. I do fear me that I shall pine with home-longings; and the sight of yon garlick-faced knave, Stephano, for ever at my heels, turns me sick when he gets within stride of me. But you jest, lady.

HERMIONE.

Blanch, thou hast been kinder to me than my fate hath answered for; and I give thee good counsel when I tell thee to return to Venice. Stay not with me; for soon the high, the proud-spirited Hermione will—I shall soon lay me in the quiet grave—and thou wilt grieve to see me sink—so young—so *early* to my doom. I look fresh, mayhap, and blooming, and they call me happy; but I am withered—here!

BLANCH.

Oh, lady, you will break my heart! (*Weeps.*) I will not go! If they bear you to the grave, I will follow you there to weep, and to quiet myself beside you.

HERMIONE.

Thou art kind, Blanch. I would thou hadst a happier mistress, thou wouldest, peradventure, be happy too.

BLANCH.

What frets you so keenly? I would compass sea and land to fetch you a morsel of comfort. Do tell me, lady. They say sorrow hath companionship, and loves its like.

HERMIONE.

Ask it not, girl: I would not tell it to the winds, lest they should babble it again; I would not whisper it to mine own heart, lest each pulse should echo it back to mine ear; I dare not think on't, lest my very thoughts should create a corporeal voice to utter it withal. Other sorrows have companionship, but mine hath none!

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

The strange gipsy woman your ladyship gave an alms to yesterday waits without, asking to see you. I would have put her away, but she looked on me, and I shuddered as I approached her.

HERMIONE.

Bid her come in.

BLANCH.

How it would delight me to have my fortune cast; but—my fate answers to your own!

Enter ZORAYDA.

HERMIONE.

Why this silence?—Thy message.

ZORAYDA.

Askest thou?—Thanks!—What marvel? they speak not
With unembodied tongue!

HERMIONE.

Thou comest, then,
But on a thankless errand; I dispense
With empty words.

ZORAYDA.

Why then I go unaudienced.
I would not vex thee, lady;—thou art strung
By unseen anguish, e'en to the topmost pitch
Thy nature bears. One other strain, it breaks!

HERMIONE.

What knowest thou?

ZORAYDA.

That other comes!

HERMIONE.

Too soon,
I wot, these heart-strings break not. How, beldame?
Thy prying eyes gather some secret. Hence
With the silly maids thou tamperest, and anon
The mistress' ear greets her own confidence;
But not on me impose thy mummeries:
None other breast than mine yet holds its trust.

ZORAYDA.

What proof requirest thou, ere faith admit
My proffer'd testimony?

HERMIONE.

Proof!

What thou, weak fool—the crazed and worn-out plaything
Of thy too credulous fancies—cannot give.
Reveal my thoughts!

ZORAYDA.

But if disclosed, there now
Be other ears to listen, lady.

HERMIONE.

Blanch,

Awhile thou may'st withdraw.

BLANCH.

How fierce her eye scowls! I marvel that her brows
should escape a singeing.—I would not leave you, gentle
mistress, until——

ZORAYDA.

Begone! —— [*HERMIONE smiles, and motions BLANCH to
depart. Exit BLANCH.*]

HERMOINE.

Now to thy task.

ZORAYDA.

What bearest thou, with such o'er-vigilant watch,
In that fair bosom?

HERMIONE.

Marry, my heart; what more?

ZORAYDA.

'Tis then but late return'd : the truant once
Had left its home — what served thee in its place,
Knowest thou yet, gentle dame?

HERMIONE.

I note thy craft :
Thou busiest me with questions, hoping thus
To catch unheeded words for thine advantage —
I answer nothing.

ZORAYDA.

None I crave, fair maiden.
An empty billet is but poor exchange
For the heart's losing !

HERMIONE.

How — a billet ! Where ?

ZORAYDA.

In that bright bosom, lady. Search it well —
And yet a thing of nought : 'tis but a form,
An every-day express of custom'd greeting,
But as a precious relic thou dost wear it ;
And 'tis to thee a coveted possession
Of more esteem than the sun-ripen'd gems
Golconda bears !

HERMIONE.

Is this my unveil'd thought ?
Not thus I'm fool'd. Perchance thy cunning eye,
For ever on the watch, hath spied this billet.
'Tis here. What more knowest thou ?

ZORAYDA.

Reserve thy scorn,
'Twill soon give place — Hark ! [*Distant music.*

Ah! start not thus. — Why that frail shudder?
 Yon guest within the chamber of thine ear
 Ere this hath had sweet audience. But come,
 My pretty spirit, hither speed, and frame
 Thine uncorporeal organ to the sound
 Of bodily voice. — [*Music approaches.*] — Hark, lady! —
 ever knew
 Your ear aforetime yon wild melody?

SONG.

Lady, list to me,
 Thy gentle spirit I'll be;
 The fire is my garment, the flood is my bed,
 And I paint the first cloud with the sunbeam red
 That rolls o'er the broad blue sea.

Lady, list to me;
 To the mountain top I flee,
 There I watch the first wave that comes laden with light,
 And its soft hue I spread o'er each billow so bright;
 With its beam I enkindle each heaven-peering height,
 And the morn's radiant canopy.

HERMIONE.

Mysterious being, say from whence that voice!
 But once — and on such feverish perception,
 The sound did strike, I thought some air-form'd vision,
 Some fantasy, hot from the teeming brain,
 Imposed unreal conceptions on mine ear,
 To which sense held no cognizance. Say where,
 Thou awful visitor!

ZORAYDA.

'Twas on the terrace, when the charmed moon
 Hung o'er the trembling stream. And thinkest thou

Spirits have not such utterance? — Oft unseen,
Upon the viewless air, strange visions float,
And voices people the unfetter'd blast,
Vouchsafed not save to those who reverence
And bow to their high bidding. Now—they speak!

HERMIONE.

And to what import?

ZORAYDA.

Thus the mystic chant.

When the proud eagle
Sighs to the dove,
And his dark wing spreads o'er her
While fluttering with love :

That eagle's bright crest,
And that dove's timid eye,
Are quench'd in the storm
That rolls recklessly by !

That storm the proud eagle
Hath swept from his nest :
But where is the dove
Shelter'd once in his breast ?

She clings to his plume,
But in death they shall sever ;
The eagle and dove
They have perish'd for ever !

HERMIONE.

The eagle? — Mantua's crest! — But who the dove?

ZORAYDA.

Tempt not yet further to thine harm : we rue
If thou break silence !

The spirit sings, but mine imperfect hearing
Shapes not its voice to aught articulate
That human utterance owes. Again—speak not—
'Twas thus he sang :

A sprite in the moon-beam,
A mote in the sun,
I dive in the smooth stream,
Through the curl'd flame I run.

I see o'er proud Mantua
The beacon's red light ;
As the taper 'tis quench'd
In the chill blast of night !

I see from the turret
A maiden's dim form,
And her white robe waves high
On the wing of the storm !

I hear a loud shriek,
With the wail of the dead ;
And that spirit from thence
To its Giver hath fled !

Some dire event breaks from the womb of time :
To thee the spirit speaks. Hermione,
If yet three days on this forbidden air
Thou breathest, Mantua and her lord
May dearly rue thy longer stay. 'Tis past.
I heed not further question. Well I know
The winds I counsel, and the turbulent flood
To soothe its rage. On, if some power prevent not,
Madly ye rush to your undoing ; then,
Fair city, thy glad voice to woe shall turn ;

The loud lament, the chill and desolate wail
Of thy bereavement shall ascend, piercing,
Unpitied, the dun pall of heaven !
Follow me not ——
Once more I meet thee : — if too soon, beware !
Thine hours are number'd.

[*Exit.*]

HERMIONE.

Three days ! — Where shall I fly ? — To what lone spot
Can I escape ? Has this wide earth no room ? —
Measureless woe ! — too vast for mortal limit ! —
Yon wild enthusiast, her impostor's craft
Hath here some secret consequence to which
These bodings tend — cheat ! Nay, thou didst affix
Fearful credentials to thy testimony ;
They wore the impress of truth. None but that gaze
Which scans the soul, may the unvisited depths
Of mind reveal, its untold subtilties
Unto the eye disclosing. But three days !
Yet once — one sad farewell !

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

A Chamber in the Inn.

CARLOS on a couch, attended by GIULIO.

CARLOS.

I thank thee, Giulio.
The couch feels easier from thine hand. 'Tis now
But as a troublesome scratch, scarce worth the pains
To work its cure. Another strain — thy lute
Strange chords doth waken, long untuned, forgot,

Slumbering untouch'd within my breast, the sound
Breathes on them sweetly ; at its marvellous bidding,
Startled they wake, quivering once more to life.
I love these ancient ballads, they do savour
O' the olden time.

GIULIO.

Good signor, my poor music
Suits not this garnish'd age : — a simple air
That lives in the heart, and floats o'er the still depths
Of long-lapsed recollections, freshening
Their stagnant surface with soft impulse — this,
Brief skill ! — 'tis all I claim.

[*Touches the chords to a slight prelude.*

They are but snatches of old songs, signor ;
Broken as fragments of the imperishing columns
Whitening some arid desert ; but they are hallow'd
By the same hand that spoil'd them !

CARLOS.

They are bonds

That with the past yet link our purer thoughts,
Our most unsullied affections. Still
The voice of other years breathes through them,
As the low breeze, while creeping timorously
Around some ancient ruin, wailing there
Sad echoes of departed greatness.

GIULIO *sings.*

There is a wood, there is a cot,
There is a gentle river ;
There is a home where I am not,
But where I would be ever.

And adown the green valley the meadows were fair,
And the breeze came to woo the young daffodils there.

There is a lip I have not press'd,
 A heart yet coldly beating;
 But true love's throb within that breast
 Will wake at others' greeting.
 And adown through the valley the morn shone so fair,
 When the breeze gently kiss'd the young bud blushing
 there.

And thou wilt light thy taper cold
 At some gay treacherous eye;
 Its flame shall still thy soul enfold
 When lovers' glance shall die!
 And adown the green valley, while morn shone so fair,
 The breeze sigh'd, and left the young bud weeping there!

CARLOS.

Woman loves not her true lover,
 A treacherous lewdster best o'ersteps her grace! —
 Another, Giulio: I could live in them —
 They feed the soul, as doth ambrosia
 The mighty gods.

GIULIO *sings*.

Let me rest mine head, lady,
 On thy bended knee:
 Every pulse to thine beats true;
 I would 'twere so with thee.
 Sing heigho!
 Under the willow tree.

My cheek will not harm thee,
 Start not from thy rest —

CARLOS.

Cease! — I do remember me the ballad
 Thou gavest yesterday. Upon my brain

So loud the music rings, this chaunt I hear not.—
Prithee again thy strings touch to the carol.

GIULIO.

Yet by your preference I know it not.
How name you the ballad?

CARLOS.

'Twas of the pilgrim, and his goodly benison.

GIULIO.

Thus? (*Plays*).

CARLOS.

The same.

GIULIO *sings*.

The chase was done, the feast was begun,
When the monarch sate proudly high ;
And the revelry rode on the wind afar,
As it swept from the darkening sky.

No lordly guest —

Enter BERTRAND.

CARLOS.

Welcome. I grew oppress'd from thy long absence —
But why that heavy, that disquieted brow?
Some choler, scarce dismiss'd, hath moved thee!

BERTRAND.

The Duke —

CARLOS.

Didst thou complain to him
Touching my wrong?

BERTRAND.

I did.

CARLOS.

Yet I have heard
This prince o'er all his peers hereto extoll'd,
The mirror of true courtesy ; embodying
The proud and chivalrous spirit of his time. —
How spake he ?

BERTRAND.

Few his words ; — but this good sword —
Bitter degradation ! — Yon proud Duke, he gave —
When from this recreant hand the traitor fell !
He had disarm'd me, Carlos !

CARLOS.

He ! — You fought ?

BERTRAND.

Ay, with the Duke — thy mistress' paramour !

CARLOS.

The Duke ! — *Her* paramour ! —
'Tis fuel to my hate.

BERTRAND.

How fares thy wound ?

CARLOS.

This ? — where ? — 'tis well. — These garments I shake off,
And put on my revenge — its panoply
Shall case my bosom. — Henceforth unto all
Compunction dead, and steel'd to every touch
Of natural sympathy, mine o'ercharged hate,
As the veil'd fire, pent in yon gathering cloud,
Deep-brooding waits, in fearful silence crouching,
Or ere it strike — 'Twas for this minion
She spurn'd me !

BERTRAND.

Such my hate to Andrea.
Together and in secret we devise —
Yet not with such precipitate haste, our counsel,
As shall defeat its own resolve — some plan
To furnish our revenge. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.

*A Chamber in the Palace.**Enter the DUKE.*

DUKE.

Arouse thee! — fly.
Ere yet the fetters closer to thine heart
Are riveted — immoved for ever!
Thou counsellest well — these are ignoble trammels.
And I do rid me of them. Once — 'tis fix'd —
A short, sad hour we meet, and then farewell!
Duty, remorseless, bids me. — There I'll pour
Into her wondering ear a hapless tale
Of thwarted love — hearts broken, severed
By obdurate fate — and in that feign'd lament,
Bewail mine own. — I must my story tell;
None other cause could I with honour urge
Why thus we part — for ever!

Enter FABIAN.

FABIAN.

My lord, a woman of strange aspect,
And habited in Eastern garb, sits now

Within the western porch, waiting your presence.
She would not tell to me her errand.

DUKE.

How —

A stranger, and from whence? — Knowest thou her name?

FABIAN.

She holds most resolute silence — I forebore
To question her.

DUKE.

Describe this sullen guest.

FABIAN.

A turban girds her brow, white as the sea-foam,
Whence, all untrammelled, her dark thin hair
Streams fitfully upon her storm-beat front;
Her eye at rest, pale fire in its black orb
Innocuous sleeps — but roused, Jove's thunder-cloud
Enkindles not so fiercely! Once it shot
Full on mine eye: — in dazzling terror yet
It haunts my brain!

DUKE.

How eloquent the tongue
When the soul stirs it! — I would see, unharm'd,
This quicken'd volcano! [Exit FABIAN.]

Some moon-struck wanderer
Craving redress for her wrong'd fancies.

*Enter FABIAN followed by ZORAYDA; she stands in silence
gazing at the DUKE.*

Woman, what seekest thou? — Doth silence best
Declare thine errand?

ZORAYDA.

Silence best, my lord,
Should tell thy destiny — Heaven hath commanded
To speak no evil.

DUKE.

A rare conceit.—What more? — Is this thy message?
Haste, — we command not back the passing time: —
To thy request.

ZORAYDA.

Much need hast thou to note
These priceless minutes; — let no fragment slip
Ungathered.—Yet my boon thou wilt not grant!
Seest thou yon shadow? —

[*She beckons him to the window.*]

DUKE.

Nought this ungifted eye beholds
But the dark battlement upon the stream,
Spread by the tranquil moon.

ZORAYDA.

Seest thou yon pennon
Furl'd from the turret, floating on the verge
Of that still, sedgy shore? —

DUKE.

Its shadow falls
Where thou dost point; — but how may this befit
With thy request?

ZORAYDA.

At thy far-echoing birth,
When hoarse artillery told to Mantua,
Thy wailing entrance to a troublous life,
Yon trembling shadow fell, as now it meets,

Just on the rippled bank, — uniting each —
The calm wave and the shore. —

DUKE.

Thy meaning, stranger.

ZORAYDA.

Ere yet the bubbling life crept through thy veins,
'Twas thus decreed: thine hour of danger comes,
And sudden death, when that dim shadow passes
Where at thy birth it brooded. —

DUKE.

(*Aside to FABIAN*). Watch this woman;
Suspicion wakes at her discourse. — (*To ZORAYDA*). —
That shadow
Hath oft-time pass'd, no danger thence betiding.

ZORAYDA.

Thy death can happen not, save when, as now,
The pale moon flings yon omen from her beam;
But ever it bodes danger.

DUKE.

For this purpose
Interest thou my chamber?

ZORAYDA.

I have sought thee
To give rejected counsel. — What! some treachery
From me thou fearest! — Bind me — gird my chains
To the unhewn rock beneath the unvisited depths
Of these abhorr'd foundations — I would wear them
Without a murmur could'st thou listen! — Hark!
Thus runs the record of thy house:

*" When the proud eagle
From his cloud-wreath'd nest
Enamour'd meets the dove,
And sighs on her soft bosom,
One shaft shall pierce them."*

Duke, beware — that shaft shall come!
Let it not find thee in that perilous hour,
Prescience forebodes thee, at some lady's ear
Sighing unhallowed love. — Its malice then
Harms not thy breast, another bears the stroke!
Remember — once again I meet thee.

[*Exit ZORAYDA.*]

FABIAN.

My lord, the guard shall rid you of the witch.

DUKE.

Let her depart, she harms me not.

FABIAN.

You seem

O'erspent with watching, and forget your couch. —
Betake you now to your accustom'd rest?

DUKE.

My rest? — 'Tis well; — but will the couch give rest?
Ay, to the wearied limb — but not the weary breast!
Follow me, boy, unto my chamber. [Exit.]

ACT IV. — SCENE I.

*A Church.**Enter two CITIZENS.*

FIRST CITIZEN.

Strange omens these !

SECOND CITIZEN.

They bode disaster, else
Hath Nature changed, and her accustom'd course
No longer holds. — See, from the ducal vault
The stone — o'er which its mailed warrior rests
In such grim pomp — is roll'd, as if that mouth
Expectant yawn'd for prey. — How comes it thus ?

THIRD CITIZEN.

Some swarth attendant, late within the tomb,
Hath left unclosed its yet insatiate gulf ;
And he returns ere long. — His task complete,
This stone, oft visited, regains its place ; —
Would it were closed for ever !

SECOND CITIZEN.

Ne'er to his country's weal a truer prince
Shall rise in Mantua — all proper tongues
To his just praise are eloquent ; — no voice
But gathers blessing, when it speaks of Andrea.
I'll peep o'er the dark wall of this huge grave.
Fresh wonders still ! — Here lie funeral trappings
Covering the entrance ; — an inscription too
Upon the pall. — [*Reads*] — “ *Andrea, the fifth Duke
Of Mantua* ” — a goodly list of honours,

Names and illustrious acts, now follow — “*Died*” —
I cannot tell those mystic characters —
Canst thou assign their import ?

FIRST CITIZEN.

I am not skill'd
To interpret mysteries ; but they are form'd
By cabalistic art. Elsewhere I've seen
The conjuror, Aldenbert, those uncouth shapes
Upon his tablets tracing. 'Tis not language
Akin to mortal tongue.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Treason, I wot, with bold and impious front,
Stalks forth uncheck'd : — it skulks not now abroad,
But in the open day roams unabash'd,
Nor shuns the sunbeam. Some uniform'd event
Is yet in ripening — it bursts ere long
The shell of this dread mystery.

Enter GRAVE-DIGGER and PRIEST.

GRAVE-DIGGER.

None, father, save the Egyptian woman, who so troubles
the church. She slept in the porch yesternight, and I sent
her away this morning betimes.

PRIEST,

Thou hast sent a message to the Duke ?

GRAVE-DIGGER.

Some half-hour ago. — I expect his highness in person
will take special note of this matter.

PRIEST.

I fear me they be foes, enemies to the Duke, who have

done this.—Treachery puts on bold aspects, when such foretokenings as these go before her, with loud admonishing of her approach. Here comes the Duke.

Enter DUKE with ATTENDANTS.

DUKE.

Good morrow, friends. I am something curious to behold this device.—Some trick of intimidation, your petty wonder-monger breeds to set our citizens agape.—You have not disturbed this masked frolic?

GRAVE-DIGGER.

My lord, it rests in such shape as when it scared me dismally ere the light was well out, about cock-crowing.

DUKE.

Knowest thou any skulking vagrant of late loitering near the church?

GRAVE-DIGGER.

None, your grace, save the tall gipsy—she slept in the porch yesternight.

DUKE.

The gipsy woman?

GRAVE-DIGGER.

She, with the linen turban, that walks the city with her arms folded—thus.

DUKE.

She was in the porch?

GRAVE-DIGGER.

I waked her there, but roughly, an hour ago.

DUKE.

Here hangs some clue to guide us.—I'll have the beldame

seized.—Raise that unseemly pall from the tomb, and close its mouth.—This inscription I'll keep as a brief chronicle of the event.—[*Takes off the inscription: a billet falls from beneath it.*]—What counsels us here? One wonder treads fast upon another's heels, and o'ertops its neighbour.—[*Reads.*]—“*I have garnished thy tomb, and it waiteth not for its prey. Depart!—When thou goest forth, but once shalt thou return hither!*”—Guard, search the city—every chink and avenue.—To your utmost speed.—This hag shall not escape.—Hence!—[*Exit Guard.*]—My friends, let not this matter trouble you; some mischievous spirit hath malice at our peace, and hopes to work confusion within the city.—Soon we unravel the flimsy web of this strange craft.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Enter DUCHESS and HERMIONE.

HERMIONE.

Laura hath not yet
Put off her sorrow.—Still doth fancy cherish
The darling form of yon misguided youth
Your lord encounter'd on the terrace.—
With long entreaty I have learnt his name;
And, as my yet unquestion'd word befits,
'Tis but a cast-off suitor of mine own!

DUCHESS.

I fear me this adventure still broods mischief.
The Duke somehow had strange intelligence
Of danger threatened to Hermione.—
On that same night he watch'd, and foil'd the ruffian,
But he forebore to afflict him farther.

HERMIONE.

Strange —

This brief-told tale —

Enter DUKE.

Welcome — thrice welcome now.

By what good chance, my lord, sought you the terrace
Few nights ago? — Some stray intelligence,
The Duchess tells, crept to your ear of danger
To me denounced!

DUKE.

Some secret whisper met me of the matter.
Know you this billet?

HERMIONE.

Forsooth its fair outside
Small import gives of such unworthy deed. —
I know not, save at once you dare commit
Its contents to my ken.

DUKE.

Well spoken, lady. —

What read you?

HERMIONE.

Carlos! — (*Reads.*)

Some strange mistake rests here. As my good word
Earns your belief — till now, I ne'er beheld
This love-lorn billet.

DUKE.

Ah, woman, pleasant still,
But full of subtlety; — perverse, untoward —
Thy ways mark'd deep by unabash'd deceit:
Well thou mayst laugh at thine imposture,

HERMIONE.

The riddle solves :—this billet by mistake
Hath found its way to yon same helpless virgin.
Laura hath dropp'd it — some officious friend
Unto your eye the unoffending page
Hath straight convey'd.

DUKE.

Thou answerest plausibly ;—
I would believe thy honied tongue.

HERMIONE.

I did repulse him, sore amazed
At his approach.—He threaten'd with his hate,
Which I do love more than his unprized favour !

DUKE.

I well remember thy reproof.

DUCHESS.

Our rebel cousin hither comes with word
Of her departure from our city.—Hence,
To-morrow, by the saffron-breaking dawn,
To Venice she returns. I urge in vain
Some further hindrance.—Wilt thou again make suit
To lady's ear, and win her stay ?

DUKE.

To-morrow !

"Let then to-morrow come if e'er it may ;
But when to-morrow comes, 'tis still to-day —
To-morrow go, and thou art never gone,
Till yon to-morrow and to-day are one !"

HERMIONE.

I must hence :

Urge me not further.

DUKE.

Nay, I urge thee not.

My will in Mantua e'er was held injunction.
I'll be thy tyrant, lady — thy stern keeper.
This day, within our palace, thou shalt be,
If willing and obedient. our guest :
If stubborn and self-will'd, our prisoner !
I'll compass thee with such delicious chains,
Thou shalt not wish e'en thine own thought were free !

HERMIONE.

Your guest this day, the last I spend in Mantua.
The night I give to Laura.

DUCHESS.

This proud night
Shall so out-mimic day, thou shalt not guess
When night hath drawn the twilight to his bosom.

Enter SYLVIO.

SYLVIO (*aside to the DUKE.*)

The guard hath yet no tidings :
The woman hides her warily.

DUKE.

Not yet !

I would, ere night, this mumming witch were found.
Without the walls perchance she lurks. Command
Their search unto the outskirts : large reward
Will follow their success. [*Exit SYLVIO.*]

DUCHESS.

At this inviting hour, we taste
The fragrance from our incense-breathing flowers :

My lord, attend you us?

The roses are fresh sprinkled,—the soft breeze
Comes heavily from their odour-blushing heads,
Faint and oppress'd with its delicious burden.

DUKE.

My spouse hath set her love on some tall poppy,
Some velvet-cheek'd, young tulip; drinking nectar
From his soft, balmy lip. I must be jealous
Of these same gentle favours.

DUCHESS.

You shall attend
Our fragrant courtship — the unwitting pander
To my stolen pleasures. Ah, my lord! what mean you?
Comes that dark frown to me, or to my lovers?

DUKE.

Nothing, Beatrice,—a passing jest,—'tis gone,—
I needs must frown when I am jealous. Now,
Fair dames, I would attend you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A Wood.

ZORAYDA, sitting at the foot of an oak.

ZORAYDA.

An outcast from an outcast race,—spurn'd, chid,
From the churl's threshold. Shunn'd, unblest'd by all:
Nor home nor heritage—I live, alone,
Without associate, tie, or fellowship

E'en to my kin. I might from these consist
Of other nature ; other substance might
Enfold my spirit,— other shape
Envelope me, than wraps the affrighted herd
Who stand aloof and gaze ! Th' inanimate forms,
Nature's unchisel'd workmanship — unsullied
By man's rude contact — 'tis with these I hold
Converse and high communion ;
And from the spirit that lives in them, free
And uncommunicable intercourse
My soul receives. In all things there exists
Distinct peculiar essence, like the soul
Our being animates ; at seasons oft,
In presence, though unseen, yet to the mind
Internal, manifest, imparting there
Miraculous influence. In secret, too —
The bodily eye, from grosser matter freed,—
In shape as palpable they come, as doth
Each outward image rise to corporeal sense.
I am not mad. The heated brain creates not
These uncall'd phantoms : yet men say I'm crazed.
They know not, dream not, of the mighty world
That lives around them. Other orbs might hold us !
— By mine art, with potent spell,
And wily stratagem, the Duke I've warn'd.
Hermione — proud victim ! Love unhallow'd
Yet lingers in their breasts, and they must sever,
Though one heart break in that most cruel parting !
There's a foul taint of murder in the wind —
I do suspect her lover — yon Venetian,
Her suitor once — rejected. Such revenge
Will oftentimes rouse the spirit up to mischief,
Loathing, it would abhor e'en if beheld
But as a guilty dream. If this fond Duke
Seek not again her presence I have hope.

To-morrow she departs from Mantua—
 No power can harm thee, save in that brief space
 Appointed with thy birth. Here comes my spy :
 The urchin loves me for the good he owes.

Enter GIULIO.

Welcome, boy !

Thine errand ?

GIULIO.

Some whisperings I've caught,
 Yet know not to what purpose they should tend.
 I heard "to-night," twice to each listener told,
 And oft a cautious glance where I but stood,
 Tuning my simple lute. As thou hast bid me,
 With careful eye, note well their secret converse,
 I hasten'd with the news : and now, good mother,
 Say me farewell.

ZORAYDA.

A toward child ;

Great largess thou mayest earn for thy discourse :
 Hence ! lest this absence tell what thine excuse
 May not conceal.

[*Exit GIULIO.*

To-night !—I'll watch. This hour of danger past,
 I'll pledge me to thy safety. Noble Mantua,
 In that dread day, my parent's forfeit life
 When thou didst spare, I vow'd to seek thy welfare ;
 And my good power, for thee and for thine house,
 Hath not its use in vain. Yet, I do fear
 The issue of this night : the vision told
 Mortal conclusion nigh—" *They will not hear*
" Warning oft utter'd, but impetuous rush,
" Unheeding, to their doom."
 Perchance some hidden meaning lurks beneath
 This fearful message ; an ambiguous sense,

Its proper import framing, when the event
From which it springs, like day-betokening morn,
Is past. His death it may not show. I'll save thee,
Or my destruction——soft!—the tramp of men:
Scouts, peradventure, on my track. Go, follow
The wild bee to its nest!—or to yon cliff
Climb with the eagle!—then ye mark my course! [*Exit.*]

Enter CARLOS and BERTRAND, meeting.

BERTRAND.

My messenger brings welcome news: to-day
Hermione again visits the palace.
Till this dim light shall fade, her promised stay—
But the first watch of night, perchance, may find
This cuckoo harbour'd yet in others' nest!

CARLOS.

'Tis well:—our friends with the opportunity
Alone are arm'd; and as the time may note
Their several parts. From the west turret
The accomplice issue signal, if to-night
The Duke refreshes in the mountain-breeze,
As 'tis his wont, around the platform. When
Upon its staff the turret pennon sinks
(The moon to this good signal will suffice),
We climb the unguarded stair, and it conducts
To our dark enterprise.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

Part of the Platform, sloping to the Palace Walls.

Enter DUKE, DUCHESS, HERMIONE, RIDOLFI.

DUKE.

We love these moon-lit walks, Hermione,
Whilst in her wane : you like her visage best,
Perchance, increasing. More I love to mark
Her gradual decay—retreating coy,
And half aside, as if ashamed to meet
The full gaze of the sun.

HERMIONE.

I love the waxing
Yet rather than the wane of yon pale light :
Like timid maid, when first her opening charms
Meet love's warm beam. Scarce on the wanton boy
She dares to gaze, till, bolder grown, her eye
Averted still, or half withdrawn, drinks in,
With silent ecstasy, love's treacherous glance.
Now his fond smile, full orb'd, the embolden'd sight
Enamour'd meets : her very being, essence,
And every faculty absorb — each thought
Rising impregn'd with love's fierce fire ; anon
There comes a change — shy gleams succeed, her brow
Hath one slight shade, scarce seen, but on its light
The darkness grows—love's brightest dream is o'er,
And his pale taper quench'd in utter gloom !

RIDOLFI.

Ay, till another change. Yon fickle goddess
Her fond, fool'd swain entices, till enamour'd

E'en to his heart's last core ; she then averts
Her love-impassion'd glance, and, scorning, shuns him !

DUCHESS.

If from deserted maid, Hermione,
Whose charms were withering in the fallow wane
Of an unprofited life, this speech forlorn
Had seem'd to ring the knell of her young hopes.
But when from rosy lips, and ardent youth,
It comes unlook'd for as a wintry chill
Beneath a summer sun.—This air blows keenly,
My locks fall with the dew—I think the night
Hath not its wonted soothness : thrice I shudder'd
As the cold breeze methought sigh'd on my bosom.
I must begone — Hermione, you go not.
'Tis the last moonlight you behold, mayhap,
In this brief stay ; take a long parting, ere
Ye bid adieu — the Duke himself attends you ;
With me, our brother his good presence grants,
Till your return.

RIDOLFI.

With such proud gallantry

I bow to your decree.

[*Exeunt* DUCHESS and RIDOLFI.]

DUKE.

Beneath the western turret
I love to walk — to watch the huge dim battlements
On the smooth river sleeping, when the moon,
Low in the brightening east, their shadow throws
Upon its calm, cold bosom.

HERMIONE.

Awhile I loiter with you there, my lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

*The Battlements.**Enter DUKE and HERMIONE.*

HERMIONE.

A pleasant tale, you say?

DUKE.

A story

At which the sad might laugh, the merry weep!

HERMIONE.

Strange modes of pleasantry—the sad might laugh?

DUKE.

That his own woes were lighter.

HERMIONE.

And yet, withal,

The merry weep?

DUKE.

So sad the tale—

HERMIONE.

In troth,

Most dolorously pleasant!

DUKE.

I've been in love.

HERMIONE.

A strange propensity — a punishment

Man suffers for his sins. You've been in love?
Most melancholy! How! I wot the Duchess
Believed you not?

DUKE.

Beatrice yet—mark me —
Most tenderly I love. Her long affection
Won my regard: but — late, another power —
It is not love, 'tis witchery, false glamour
Chaining the sense, unwilling to be held
In such deep thrall — I've seen a basilisk,
And it hath holden me within the circuit
Of its charmed eye. How counsel you? how break
From its bright glance?

HERMIONE.

I know not where, my lord,
You're held, or how enchain'd. Knows she your love?

DUKE.

I sought her, and the truth unto her ear
I utter'd. Was it well?

HERMIONE.

'Twere answer'd best
In the concealed purpose unto which
Truth's outward semblance serv'd. What meaning else
Behind it crouch'd?

DUKE.

That we might part for ever.

HERMIONE.

For ever!—Yes — 'twas well!
What answer gave she?

DUKE.

Answer?—Oh —'twas well!

Then we must part, Hermione?

HERMIONE.

We part!

Wherefore for ever?

DUKE.

I would not again

Cringe in thy burning glance, — and yet — I might —

This foolish heart its vanish'd dream forgot —

Unmoved endure thy presence! Bitter the pang!

I could not say for ever! I should cling

As the doom'd wretch to life, loosing his hold

But with the heart's last throb!

HERMIONE.

I cannot counsel thus!

Alas! more need some power above our own

To tear us hence — to sever. You will forget

This idle thought — 'tis but a vagrant breath,

Stirring your past affections — they respond

Untouch'd, when memory wakes the soft still voice

Of other years. Their echoes o'er, again

Peace, haply frightened thence, your bosom visits.

I would not now for ever part!

DUKE.

Then for a time — when absence

The torn heart heals, we meet again. Hermione,

For thee, in this night's converse, have I risk'd

My happiness, my hope, and every comfort

Which most I prize — my peace, my honour — all

Committed to thy trust — true confidence

If not in mutual charge — nor interchange

Of strict communion held. If one alone
The precious load entrusts, it is o'erbalanced
Without due counterpoise, reciprocal faith,
And it endures not. Tell me — nay, but listen —
This heart unfetter'd, offer'd thee, unplighted,
Would'st thou have ta'en ?

HERMIONE.

Indeed, I cannot now
Such wild words answer. Spare me but this trial —

DUKE.

Nay, answer me — what — silent? — why 'tis well.
And so we part — but I repent me now
Thou hast my trust. No answer? — then 'tis well!
We part for ever! On that treacherous face
I would not gaze again.

HERMIONE.

My lord, you must —
If this suffice — I answer — *Yes!*

DUKE.

Angel
Of soul visiting light! the storm hath still'd
At thy omnipotent word! I would not ——

Enter ZORAYDA hastily, before the DUKE; she points to the stream.

What notest thou, dun sorceress? — speak!

ZORAYDA.

Yon shadow!

DUKE.

Yet two full hours unspent, ere on the stream
Yon pennon flits: and now we part. But who

Sent thee with such authority — with power
To question, and to watch, with daring eye,
Mine every movement? I have sought thee, fiend!
If thine hell-vomited sire protect thee not,
Again thou shalt not 'scape. I charge thee, witch!
Confederate with foul treachery.

ZORAYDA.

There's treason in the air!
Meet not the wind, it blows incontinently —
The maid hath other lovers.

HERMIONE.

Hag! thy meaning?
We study not ambiguous phrase.

DUKE,

I'll crush thy treason,
Ere it be ripe for hatching.

[*As the DUKE raises the silver call to his lips,*
ZORAYDA seizes his arm.

ZORAYDA.

'Tis for thy rescue — stay! one moment stay
Thy rash resolve. If I depart, undone,
Destroy'd this night!

[*The DUKE makes the signal.*

Rash prince! it shriek'd thy doom!

Enter Guard.

DUKE.

Seize that bold traitress! — stop her hated croak!
Lest each ensnared accomplice, if such be
Within her call, gain tidings of her seizure.

To-morrow, and in private, mark me, Hugo,
We hear her further.

ZORAYDA.

To-morrow! — nay, to-night, proud Duke.
To-morrow is not thine. Beware!

[They lead her away.

DUKE.

Of thee!

Thou fearful wonder. 'Tis not idle terror
O'ermasters me, but yon foul-plotting witch
Quails me unwarily. Our country's welfare,
Perchance, brings o'erused caution; yet the wise
No proffer'd warning slights. Within the palace
We may defy an ambush'd foe.

HERMIONE.

To this,

Ere mischief burst abroad, I would entreat.
Yon being hath intelligence not breathed
From mortal lips!

DUKE.

I dare not say

The last farewell: the coming word, when summon'd,
So galls my tongue, it hath no utterance
When it might pass. The breath that from it issues
Parches my palate; like the hot simoom,
It scorches, though it sweep as stilly o'er
Some blasted, bladeless desert! —
I dream! — or I am fool'd! — unbind me, dæmon!
Unseal mine eyeballs! — they are possess'd — again!
Glazed with thy mockeries! I see not: hark!
'Tis but the mental image to the brain
Recoiling: yet as palpable it comes!
What seest thou? — yon shadow? — where?

HERMIONE.

Yon shadow ?

DUKE.

It cannot be : a brief told moment past,
 I marked beyond the brink, on the dim wood,
 The shadow waving. Now 'tis strange. There!—there!
 How keen this air creeps curdling to my vitals! —
 The shadow yet hangs dark and motionless
 On shore and wave !

HERMIONE.

Whence comes this wondering terror ?

The flag hath on its staff but newly dropp'd —
 Look to the turret, why that spell-bound gaze
 So wildly on the stream !

DUKE.

Fell hag ! thy boding screech
 Too surely sped. They come ! Protect me, Heaven !

*Enter four Assassins, masked. Three of them attack the DUKE,
 ere he can make signals for the Guard; whilst their leader seizes
 on HERMIONE.*

HERMIONE.

Help ! — murderers ! Unhand me, wretch.

[*He stops her mouth.*]

CARLOS.

Wretch ! 'tis thy Carlos come to woo — not now
 To kiss thy very footprints, and the earth
 Whereon they fell ! I'll bear thee hence, my mistress ;
 And thou shalt live my menial slave. Rage not —
 I'll tame thy spirit, lady. Thou shalt crouch,
 My gentle captive, as thy Carlos once,

R

To lick the dust, and I will spurn thee. Nay,
Content thee, dame, our friends will do thee service.

[*The DUKE defends himself against his assailants.
One of the Assassins falls.*

DUKE.

There, villain ! my good brand hath served thee.

[*HERMIONE, whilst struggling with CARLOS, frees
herself by a sudden effort, and seizes the sword
of the dying ruffian.*

HERMIONE.

I'll bury this, deep, to thy heart, monster,
If thou approach. Help, guards !

CARLOS.

Thy tongue I fear
More than thy weapon. [*Attempts to cover her mouth.*

HERMIONE.

Then to thy doom, hell-destined spirit ! [*Stabs him.*

CARLOS.

Oh — fly ! — save ye, my friends — escape whilst yet —
The guards — this fiend hath summon'd — [*Falls.*

HERMIONE (*rushes towards the DUKE*).

Cowards ! ye cannot escape. They come !

BERTRAND (*tearing off his mask*).

Then swifter come
Insatiate vengeance. To thy place, proud Mantua !

[*Makes a desperate lunge at the DUKE, who
falls.*

DUKE.

A mortal thrust ! Hermione, now — now —
Farewell — 'tis past !

BERTRAND.

Thou leavest not thy paramour.

[*Stabs* HERMIONE.

Hence ! to the pale ghosts howl in company.

HERMIONE.

I'd bless thee — for this —

[*Dies.*

Enter Guard, Soldiers ; they seize the Conspirators.

DUKE.

Too late ye come —

Life ebbs fast from my veins — mine eyes are dim ;
But there's a voice — or death unreins my fancy —
Comes o'er mine ear, I do remember, mingling
Ere now 'mid mortal strife.

BERTRAND.

'Tis I : mine hate is quench'd but with the blood
That nourish'd thee ! Now to your dungeons lead me :
Your rarest tortures — haste. This blest revenge
Will slake your hottest fires, heal the hurt flesh,
Make the unpitying rack a gentle pillow.
Softer than cygnet down, or thy death-couch,
Unscathed Duke. Guards, do your office.

DUKE.

Unhappy man ! thy fierce, untamed spirit,
In its own fiery nature, hath to endure
What bodily tortures reach not. I forgive thee.
But this good city, thy most unjust hate

This night bereaves of her protector, seeks
Her just atonement! Bear me hence — Beatrice,
To thy loved arms. Would that I ne'er had left thee —
A fearful meeting now — Hermione!
What — dead! My cup is drain'd e'en to the dregs,
The vessel shiver'd, dash'd erewhile to earth! —

Just Heaven!

I bow to thee! Thou hast not sent my spirit
Unshriven to thy bar — brief space on earth
My span of time, but unto thee I turn,
Abused mercy; grant with my last last hour
Repentance, and thy promised pardon!

[*Exeunt Attendants with the Duke.*]

LEGENDS.

ONE of the following Legends, The Crystal Goblet, was written for the Traditions of the County of York. It appeared by permission in an Annual entitled, "The White Rose of York;" but having only had a local circulation at the time, and having been carefully revised by the Author during the last winter of his life, it finds a place in the present volume.

MOTHER RED CAP;

OR,

THE ROSICRUCIANS.

A LEGEND OF THE NORTH.

PART THE FIRST.

IN the wild and mountainous region of East Lancashire, at the foot of the long line of hills called Blackstonedged, and not far from the town of Rochdale, stood one of those old grim-looking mansions, the abode of our Saxon ancestors; a quiet sheltered nest, where ages and generations had alike passed by. The wave of time had produced no change; the name and the inheritance were the same, and seemingly destined to continue unaltered by the mutations, the common lot of all that man labours to perpetuate. This state of things existed at the date of our story; now, alas! the race of its former possessors is extinct, their name only remains a relic of things that were, — their former mansion standing*, as if in mockery, amidst the hum of wheels, and in melancholy contrast with the toil and animation of this manufacturing, money-getting district.

Buckley Hall, to which we allude, is still an object of interest to the antiquary and the lover of romance, telling of days that are for ever departed, when the lords of these

* Within the last few years, since this story was written, the old house itself has been levelled with the ground.

paternal acres were the occupants, not impoverishers, of the soil from unrecorded ages, — constituting a tribe, a race of sturdy yeomanry attached to their country and to the lands on which they dwelt. But they are nigh extinct, — other habits and other pursuits have prevailed. Profuse hospitality and rude benevolence have given place to habits of business as they are called, and to a more calculating and enterprising disposition. The most ancient families have become absorbed or overwhelmed by the mighty progress of this new element, this outpouring of wealth as from some unseen source ; and in many instances their names only are recognised in these old and rickety mansions, now the habitation of the mechanic and the plebeian.

Many of these dwellings remain, — a melancholy contrast to the trim erections, the symbols of a new race, along with new habits and forms of existence, sufficiently testifying to the folly and the vain expectations of those who toil and labour hard for a long lease with posterity.

This mansion, like the rest of our ancestral dwellings of the better sort, was built of wood, on a stone basement. The outside structure curiously vandyked in a zig-zag fashion with wooden partitions, the interstices were filled with wicker-work, plastered with well-tempered clay, to which chopped straw imparted additional tenacity. When newly embellished, looking like the pattern, black and white, of some discreet magpie perched on the wooden pinnacles terminating each gable, or hopping saucily about the porch, — that never-failing adjunct to these homely dwellings. Here, on a well-scoured bench, the master of the house would sit in converse with his family or his guests, enjoying the fresh and cheering breeze, without being fully exposed to its effects. The porch was universally adopted as a protection to the large flagged hall called the “house-part,” which otherwise might have been seriously incommoded by the inclement atmosphere of these bleak districts. On one

side of the hall, containing the great fire-place, was the "guest parlour." Here the best bed was usually fixed; and here, too, all great "occasions" took place. Births, christenings, burials, all emanated from, or were accomplished in, this family chamber. Every member was there transmitted from the cradle to the grave. The low wide oaken stairs, to the first bending of which an active individual might have leaped without any such superfluous media. The naked gallery, with its little quaint doors on each side, hatched in the usual fashion, this opening into the store-room, that into the servants' lodging, another into the closet where the choicest confections were kept. Opposite were the bedchambers, and at the extremity of the gallery a ladder generally pointed the way to a loft, where, amongst heaps of winter stores, dried roots, and other vegetables, probably reposed one or two of the male servants on a straw mattress, well fortified from cold by an enormous quilt.

Our description will apply with little variation to all. — We love these deserted mansion-houses, that speak of the olden time, its good cheer and its rude but pleasant intercourse; times and seasons that are for ever gone, — though we crave pardon for indulging in what may perhaps find little favour in the eyes of this generation, whose hopes and desires are to the future, who say the past is but the childhood of our existence, — it is gone, and shall not return. But there are yet some who love to linger on the remnants, the ruins of a former state, who look at these time-honoured relics but as links that bring them into closer communion with bygone ages, and would fain live in the twilight of other years rather than the meridian splendour of the present. But we must not be seduced any further by these reflections; our present business concerns the legend whose strange title stands at the head of this article.

In one of the upper chambers at Buckley Hall before

named, and not long ago, was an iron ring fixed to a strong staple in the wall; and to this ring a fearful story is still attached. The legend, as it is often told, is one of those wild improbable fictions based on facts, distorted and embellished to suit the taste of the listener or the fancy of the narrator. It will be our task to make out from these imaginative materials a narrative divested, as much as possible, of the marvellous, but, at the same time, retaining so much as will interest and excite the reader and lover of legendary lore.

It was in one of those genial, mellow, autumnal evenings, —so dear to all who can feel their influence, and so rare a luxury to the inhabitants of this weeping climate,—when all living things wear the hue and warmth of the glowing atmosphere in which they are enveloped, that two lovers were sauntering by the rivulet, a “wimpling burn” that, rising among the bare and barren moorlands of this uncultivated region, runs past Buckley Hall into the valley of the Roch.

It was near the close of the sixteenth century, in the days of good Queen Bess, yet their apparel was somewhat homely even for this era of stuffed doublets and trunk-hose. Such unseemly fashions had hardly travelled into these secluded districts; and the plain, stout, woollen jacket of their forefathers, and the ruffs, tippets, stays, and stomachers of their grandmothers, formed the ordinary wear of the belles and beaux of the province. Fardingales, or hooped petticoats, we are happy to say, for the sake of our heroine, were unknown.

“Be of good cheer,” said the lover; “there be troubles enow, believe me, without building them up out of our own silly fears—like boys with their snow hobgoblins, terrible enough in the twilight of fancy, but a gleam of sunshine will melt and dissipate them. Thou art sad to-night without reason. Imaginary fears are the worst to cope

withal ; having nor shape nor substance, we cannot combat with them. 'Tis hard, indeed, fighting with shadows."

"I cannot smile to-night, Gervase ; there's a mountain here—a foreboding of some deadly sort. I might as soon lift 'Robin Hood's Bed,' yonder, as remove it."

"No more of this, my dearest Grace ; at least, not now. Let us enjoy this bright and sunny landscape. How sharply cut are those crags, yonder, on the sky. Blackstone-edge looks almost within a stride, or at least a good stone's throw. Thou knowest the old legend of Robin Hood ; how that he made yonder rocks his dormitory, and by way of amusement pitched or coited huge stones at a mark on the hill just above us, being some four or five miles from his station. It is still visible along with several stones lying near, and which are evidently from the same rock as that on which it is said he slept."

"I've heard such silly tales often. Nurse had many of these old stories wherewith to beguile us o' winter nights. She used to tell, too, about Eleanor Byron, who loved a fay or elf, and went to meet him at the fairies' chapel away yonder where the Spodden gushes through its rocky cleft,—'tis a fearful story—and how she was delivered from the spell. I sometimes think on't till my very flesh creeps, and I could almost fancy that such an invisible thing is about me."

With such converse did they beguile their evening walk, ever and anon making the subject bend to the burden of their own sweet ditty of mutual *unchanging* love !

Grace Ashton was the only daughter of a wealthy yeoman, one of the gentry of that district, residing at Clegg Hall, a mile or two distant. Its dark, low gables and quiet smoke might easily be distinguished from where they stood. It was said that the Cleggs, its original owners, had been beggared and dispossessed by vexatious and fraudulent lawsuits ; and the Ashtons had achieved their

purpose by dishonesty and chicane. However this might be, busy rumour gave currency and credit to the tale, though, probably, it had none other foundation than the idle and malevolent gossip of the envious and the unthinking.

They had toiled up a narrow pathway on the right of a woody ravine, where the stream had evidently formed itself a passage through the loose strata in its course. The brook was heard, though hidden by the tangled underwood, and they stopped to listen. Soothing but melancholy was the sound. Even the birds seemed to chirp there in a sad and pensive twitter, not unnoticed by the lovers, though each kept the gloomy and fanciful apprehensions untold.

Soon they gained the summit of a round heathery knoll, whence an extensive prospect rewarded their ascent. The squat, square tower of Rochdale Church might be seen above the dark trees nestling under its grey walls. The town was almost hidden by a glowing canopy of smoke gleaming in the bright sunset,—towards the north the bare bleak hills, undulating in sterile loneliness, and associating only with images of barrenness and desolation. Easterly, a long, level burst of light swept across meadow, wood, and pasture; green slopes dotted with bright homesteads, to the very base apparently of, though at some distance from, Blackstonedge, now of the deepest, the most intense blue. Such a daring contrast of colour gave a force and depth to the landscape, which, had it been portrayed, would to critical eyes, perhaps, have outraged the modesty of Nature.

The sky was already growing cold and grey above the ridge opposed to the burning brightness of the western horizon, and Grace Ashton pointed out the beautiful but fleeting hues of the landscape around them. Her companion, however, was engrossed by another object. Before them was an eminence marking the horizon to the north-west, though not more than a good bow-shot from where

they stood. Between this and their present standing was a little grassy hollow, through which the brook we have described trickled rather than ran, amidst moss and rushes, rendering the ground swampy and unsafe. On this hill stood "Robin Hood's coit-stones;" and on the largest, called the "marking-stone," a wild-looking and haggard figure was couched. Her garments, worn and tattered, were of a dingy red; and her cap, or *coiffure* as it was then called, was of the same colour. Her head was bent forward beyond the knee, as though she were listening towards the ground, or was expecting the approach of the individuals who now came suddenly, and to themselves unexpectedly, in view. Her figure, in the glow of that rich autumnal sky, looked of the deepest crimson, and of a bloody and portentous aspect.

"What strange apparition is yonder," said Gervase Buckley, "on the hill top there before us? Beshrew me, Grace, but it hath an evil and a rancorous look."

But Grace, along with a short scream of surprise, betrayed, too, her recognition of the object, and clung with such evident terror to her companion that he turned from the object of his inquiries to gaze on his mistress.

"What!" said he, "hath yonder unknown such power? Methinks it hath moved thee strangely. Speak, Grace; can that hideous appearance in any way be linked with our destiny?"

"I am ignorant as thou. But its coming, as I have heard, always forbodes disaster to our house. Hast not heard of a Red Woman that sometimes haunts this neighbourhood? I never saw her until now, but I've heard strange and fearful stories of her appearing some years ago, and blighting the corn, poisoning the cattle, with many other diabolical witcheries. She is best known by the name of 'Mother Red Cap.'"

"I've heard of this same witch in my boyhood. But

what should we fear? She is flesh and blood like ourselves; and, in spite of the prevailing belief, I could never suppose power would be granted to some, generally the most wicked and the most worthless, which from the rest of mankind is capriciously withheld."

"Hush, Gervase; thou knowest not how far the arch-enemy of mankind may be permitted to afflict bodily our guilty race. I could tell thee such tales of yonder creature as would stagger even the most stubborn of unbelievers."

"I will speak to her, nevertheless. Tarry here, I prithee, Grace. It were best I should go alone."

"Oh, do not — do not! None have sight of her, as I've heard, but mischief follows. What disaster then may we not expect from her evil tongue. I shudder at the anticipation. Stay here. I will not be left; and I cannot cross this dangerous swamp."

Buckley was, however, bent on the adventure. His natural curiosity, inflamed by forbidden longing after the occult and the mysterious to which he was too prone, even though sceptical as to their existence, rendered him proof against his mistress' entreaties.

Probably from situation, or rather, it might be, the distance was judged greater than in reality it proved, but the form before them looked preternaturally enlarged, and, as she raised her head, her arms were flung out high above it like withered and wasted branches on each side. Trembling in every limb, Grace clung to her lover, and it was after long persuasion that she suffered him to lift her over the morass, and was dragged unwillingly up the hill. As though she were the victim of some terrible fascination, her eyes were constantly riveted on the object. A raven wheeled round them, every moment narrowing the circle of its flight, and the malicious bird looked eager for mischief.

As they approached nearer to the summit this ill-omened thing, after having brushed so close that they felt the very

breath from its wings, alighted beside the Red Woman, who hardly seemed to notice, though well aware of their proximity.

They paused when several paces distant, and she rose up suddenly, extending both arms, apparently to warn them from a nearer approach. Her skinny lips rapidly moving to and fro, and her dark, withered, bony, and cadaverous features, gave her more the appearance of a living mummy, or a resurrection from the charnel-house, than aught instinct with the common attributes of humanity.

Buckley was for a moment daunted. The form was so unlike anything he had ever seen. He was almost persuaded of the possibility that it might be some animated corpse doomed to wander forth either for punishment or expiation. Her lips still moved. A wild glassy eye was fixed upon them, and as she yet stood with extended arms, Gervase, almost wrought to desperation, cried out,

“Who art thou? Thy business here?”

A hollow sound, hardly like the tones of a human voice, answered in a slow and solemn adjuration:

“Beware, rash fools! None approach the Red Woman but to their undoing.”

“I know no hindrance to my free course in this domain. By whose authority am I forbidden?” said he, taking courage.

“Away — mine errand is not to thee unless provoked.”

“Unto whom is thy message?”

“To thy leman — thy ladye-love, whom thou wilt cherish to thine hurt. Leave her, ay, though both hearts break in the separation.”

“I will not.”

“Then be partaker of the wrath that is just ready to burst upon her doomed house.”

“I told thee,” said Grace, “she is the herald of misfortune! What woe does she denounce? What cruel judg-

ment hast thou invoked upon our race?" cried she to this grim messenger of evil.

"Evil will — Evil must! I will cling to ye till your last sustenance be dried up, and your inheritance be taken from ye."

"Her fate be mine," said Buckley, indignantly. "Her good or evil fortune I will share."

"Be it so. Thou hast made thy choice, and henceforth thou canst not complain."

She stretched out her two hands, one towards Clegg Hall, the abode of the maiden, and the other towards Buckley, her lover's paternal roof, from which a blue curl of smoke was just visible over the rising grounds beneath them.

"A doom and a curse to each," she muttered. "Your names shall depart, and your lands to the alien and the stranger. Your honours shall be trodden in the dust, and your hearths laid waste, and your habitations forsaken."

In this fearful strain she continued until Buckley cried out —

"Cease thy mumbling, witch. I'll have thee dealt with in such wise thy tongue shall find another use."

Turning upon him a look of scorn, she seemed to grow fiercer in her maledictions.

"Proud minion," she cried, "thou shalt die childless and a beggar!"

The cunning raven flapped his great heavy wings and seemed to croak an assent. He then hopped on his mistress' shoulder, and apparently whispered in her ear.

"Sayest thou so?" said the witch. "Then give it to me, Ralph."

The bird held out his beak, and out popped a plain gold ring.

"Give this to thy mother, Dame Buckley. Say 'tis long since they parted company; and ask if she knows or remembers aught of the Red Woman. Away!"

She threw the ring towards them. Both stooped to pick it up. They examined it curiously for a short space.

"'Tis a wedding-ring," said Buckley, "but not to wed bride of mine. Where was this ——"

He stopped short in his inquiry, for lifting up his eyes he found the donor was gone!

Neither of them saw the least trace of her departure. The stone whereon she sat was again vacant. All was silent, undisturbed, save the night breeze that came sighing over the hill, moaning and whistling through the withered bent and rushes at their feet.

The shadows of evening were now creeping softly around them, and the valley below was already wrapped in mist. The air felt very chill. They shuddered, but it was in silence. This fearful vision, for such it now appeared to have been, filled them with unspeakable dread.

Gervase yet held the ring in his hand. He would have thrown it from him, but Grace Ashton forbade.

"Do her bidding in this matter," said she. "Give it thy mother, and ask counsel of the sage and the discreet. There is some fearful mystery, — some evil impending, or my apprehensions are strangely misled."

They returned, but he was more disturbed than he cared to acknowledge. He felt as though some spell had been cast upon him, and cowed his hitherto undaunted spirit.

They again wound down beside the rivulet into the meadows below, where the mist alone pointed out the course of the stream. The bat and the beetle crossed their path. Evil things only were abroad. All they saw and felt seemed to be ominous of the future. As they passed through a little wicket to the hall-porch, Nicholas Buckley the father met them.

"Why how now, loiterers? The cushat and the curlew have left the hill, and yet ye are abroad. 'Tis time the maiden were at home, and looking after the household."

"We've been hindered, good Sir. We will just get speech of our dame, and then away home with the gentle Grace. Half an hour's good speeding will see her safe."

"Ay — belike," said the old man. "Lovers and loiterers make mickle haste to part. Our dame is with the maids and the milk-pans i'the dairy."

The elder Buckley was a hale hearty yeoman, of a ruddy and cheerful countenance. A few wrinkles were puckered below the eyes; the rest of his face was sleek and comfortably disposed. A beard, once thick and glossy, was grown grey and thin, curling up, short and stunted, round his portly chin. Two bright twinkling eyes gave note of a stirring and restless temper—too sanguine, may be, for success in the great and busy world, and not fitted either by education or disposition for its suspicions or its frauds. Yet he had the reputation of a clever merchant. Rochdale, even at that early period, was a well-known mart for the buyers and sellers of woollen stuffs and friezes. Many of the most wealthy merchants, too, indulged in foreign speculations and adventures, and amongst these the name of Nicholas Buckley was not the least conspicuous.

They passed on to the dairy, where Dame Eleanor scolded the maids and skimmed the cream at the same moment, by way of economy in time.

"What look ye for here?" was her first inquiry, for truly her temper was of a hasty and searching nature; somewhat prone, as well, to cavilling and dispute; requiring much of her husband's placidity to furnish oil for the turbulent waters of her disposition.

"Thou wert better at thy father's desk, than idling after thine unthrifty pleasures: to-morrow, may be, sauntering among the hills with hound and horn, beating up with all the rabble in the parish."

"Nay, mother, chide not: I was never made for merchan-

dize and barter—the price of fleeces in Tod-lane, and the broad ells at Manchester market.”

“And why not?” said the dame, sharply. “Haven’t I been the prop and stay of the house? Haven’t I made bargains and ventures when thou hast been idling in hall and bower with love-ditties and ladies’ purples?”

She was now moved to sudden choler, and Gervase did not dare to thwart her further, — letting the passion spend itself by its own efforts, as he knew it were vain to check its torrent.

Now Dame Eleanor Buckley was of a sharp and florid countenance, — short-necked and broad-shouldered, her nose and chin almost hiding a pair of thin severe lips, the two prominences being close neighbours, especially in anger. In truth she guided, or rather managed, the whole circle of affairs; aiding and counselling the speculations of her husband, who had happily been content with the produce and profit of his paternal acres, had not his help-mate, who inherited this mercantile spirit from her family, urged her partner to such unwonted lust and craving for gain.

A huge bundle of keys hung at her girdle, which, when more than usually excited, did make a most discordant jingle to the tune that was a-going. Indeed, the height and violence of her passion might be pretty well guessed at by this index to its strength.

When the storm had in some degree subsided, Gervase held up the ring.

“What’s that, silly one? A wedding-ring!”

She grew almost pale with wrath. “How darest thou? — thee! — a ring! — to wed ere thou hast a home for thy pretty one. Ye may go beg, for here ye shall not tarry. Go to the next buckle-beggar! A pretty wedding truly! When thou hast learned how to keep her honestly, ’twill be time enough to wed. But thou hast not earned a doit to put beside her dower, and all our ready monies, and more, be in trade;

though, for the matter o'that, the pulling would be no great business either. But I tell thee again, thy father shall not portion an idler like thyself and pinch his trade. Marry, 'tis enough to do, what with grievous sums lost in shipwrecks, and the time we have now to wait our returns from o'er sea."

She went on at this rate for a considerable space, pausing at last, more for lack of breath than subject-matter of discourse.

"Mother," said he, when fairly run down; "'tis not a purchase, 'tis a gift."

"By some one sillier than thyself, I warrant."

"I know not for that—I had it from a stranger."

"Stranger still," she replied sharply, chuckling at her own conceit.

"Look at it, mother,—Know you such an one?"

The dame eyed it with no favour, but she turned it over with a curious look, at the same time lifting her eyes now and then towards the ceiling, as though some train of recollection was awakening in her mind.

"Where gat ye this?" said Dame Eleanor, in a subdued but still querulous tone.

"On the hill-top yonder."

"Treasure-trove belongs to Sir John Byron.* The Lord of the Manor claims all from the finders."

* In the 39th of Eliz., Sir John Biron held the manor of Rochdale, subsequently held by the Ramsays; but in the 13th of Charles I. it was reconveyed. The Biron family is more ancient than the Conquest. Gospatrick held lands of Ernais de Buron in the county of York, as appears by Domesday Book. Sir Nicholas Byron distinguished himself in the civil wars of Charles I.; and, in consequence of his zeal in the royal cause, the manor of Rochdale was sequestered. After the Restoration, it reverted to the Byrons. Sir John, during these troubles, was made a peer, by the title of Baron Byron of Rochdale. In 1823, the late Lord Byron sold the manor, after having been in possession of the family for nearly three centuries.

"It was a gift."

"Humph. Hast met gold-finders on the hills, or demons or genii, that guard hidden treasure?"

"We've seen the Red Woman!"

Had a sudden thunder-clap burst over them, she could not have been more startled. She stood speechless, and seemingly incapable of reply. Holding the ring in one hand, her eyes were intently fixed upon it.

"What is it that troubles you?" said Gervase. "Yon strange woman bade me give you the ring, and ask if so be that you remembered her."

The dame looked up, her quick and saucy petulance exchanged for a subdued and melancholy air.

"Remember thee! thou foul witch, — ay, long, long years have passed: I thought thy persecutions at an end; thy prediction was nigh forgotten. It was my wedding-ring, Gervase!"

"More marvellous still."

"Peace, and I'll tell thee. Grace Ashton, come forward. I know thine ears are itching for the news. Well, well, it was when thou wast but a boy, Gervase, and I remember an evening just like this. I was standing by the draw-well yonder, looking, I now bethink me, at the dove-cote where I suspected thieves; and in a humour somewhat of the sharpest, I trow. By-and-bye comes what I thought an impudent beggar-woman for an alms. Her dress was red and tattered, with a high red cap to match. I chided her, it might be somewhat harshly, and I shall not soon forget the malicious look she put on. 'I ask not, I need not thy benison,' she said; 'I would have befriended thee, but I now curse thee altogether:' and stretching out her shrivelled arm, dry and bare, she shook it, threatening me with vengeance. Suddenly, or ere I was aware, she seized my left hand, drew off my wedding-ring; breathing upon it and mumbling a spell, she held it as though for me to take back,

but with such a fiendish look of delight that I hesitated. All on the sudden I remembered to have heard my grandmother say, that should a witch or warlock get your wedding-ring, and have time to mutter over it a certain charm, *so long as that ring is above ground*, so long misery and misfortune do afflict the owner. Lucky it was I knew of this, for instead of replacing it I threw it into the well, being the nearest hiding-place. And happy for me and thee it was so near; for, would you believe, though hardly a minute's space in my hand, the black heifer died, the red cow cast her calf, and a large venture of merchandize was wrecked in a fearful gale off the gulph. I had no sooner thrown it into the well than the witch looked more diabolical than ever. 'It will come again, dame,' said she, 'and then look to it;' and with this threat she departed. But what am I doing? If it be the ring, which I doubt not, I've had it o'er long in my keeping. Even now disaster may be a-brewing; and is there not a richly freighted ship on its passage with silks and spices? I'll put it out of her reach this time anyhow. No! I'll hide it where never a witch in Christendom shall poke it out."

Dame Eleanor went to the little burn below. Stooping, she scooped a hole in the gravel under water; there she laid the ring, and covered it over with stones.

"Thou'rt always after some of thy megrims, dame," said the elder Buckley, who had been watching her from the porch. "Some spell or counter-charm, I'se warrant."

With a look of great contempt for the incredulity of her spouse, she replied,

"Ay, goodman, sit there and scoff your fill. If't hadn't been for my care and endeavours you had been penniless ere now. But so it is, I may slave night and day, I reckon. The whole roof-tree, as a body may say, is on my shoulders, and what thanks? More hisses than thanks, more knocks than fair words."

Never so well pleased as when opportunity was afforded for grumbling, the dame addressed herself again to her evening avocations.

Pondering deeply what should be the issue of these things, Gervase set out with Grace Ashton to her house at Clegg Hall, a good mile distant. Evening had closed in—a chill wind blew from the hills. The west had lost its splendour, but a pure transparent brightness filled its place, across which the dark wavy outline of the high moorlands rested in deep unvarying shadow. In these bright depths a still brighter star hung, pure and of a diamond-like lustre, the precursor, the herald of a blazing host just rising into view.

As they walked on, it may well be supposed that the strange occurrences of the last few hours were the engrossing theme of their discourse.

“My mother is a little too superstitious, I am aware,” said Gervase. “But what I have witnessed to-night has rendered me something more credulous on this head than aforetime.”

“I don’t half like this neighbourhood,” said his companion, looking round. “It hath an ill name, and I could almost fancy the Red Woman again, just yonder in our path.”

She looked wistfully; it was only the mist creeping lazily on with the stream.

They were now ascending the hill towards Beil or Belfield, where the Knights Templars had formerly an establishment. Not a vestige now remains, though at that period a ruinous tower covered with ivy, a gateway, and an arch, existed as relics of their former grandeur.

“Here lived the Lady Eleanor Byron,” said Grace, pointing to the old hall close by, and as though an unpleasant recollection had crossed her. She shuddered as they passed by the grim archway beneath the tower. Whether it was fancy or reality, she knew not, but as she looked curiously

through its ivied tracery, she thought the Red Woman was peering out maliciously upon them. She shrank aside, and pointed to the spot; but there was nothing visible save the dark and crumbling ruins, from which their steps were echoed with a dull and sullen sound.

The night wind sighed round the grey battlements, and from its hidden recesses came moans and whispers, at least so it seemed to their heated imaginations.

"Let us hasten hence," said Grace; "I like not this lonely spot. There was always a fear and a mystery about it. The tale of the invisible sylphid and Eleanor Byron's elfish lover, haunts me whenever I pass by, and I feel as though something was near, observing and influencing every movement and every thought."

"Come, come, adone I pray. Let not fear o'ermaster reason, else we shall see bogles in every bush."

Above the gateway, in the little square tower now pulled down, was a loop-hole, nearly concealed by climbing shrubs, which rendered it easy for a person within to look out without being observed. As they passed, a low humming din was heard. Then a rude ditty trolled from some not unskilful performer. The lovers stayed to listen, when a dark figure issued out of the gateway singing:—

"The bat haunts the tower,
And the red-breast the bower,
And the merry little sparrow by the chimney hops,
Good e'en, hoots master owl,
To-whoo, to-whoo, his troll,
Sing heigho, swing the can with ——"

"What, thee, Tim! is that thy stupid face?" said Gervase, breaking in upon his ditty, and right glad to be delivered from supernatural fears, though the object of them proved only this strolling minstrel. "Thou might as well kill us outright as frighten us to death."

He that stood before them was one of those wandering

musicians that haunt fairs and merry-makings, wakes, and such like pastimes; playing the fiddle and jewtrump too at weddings and alehouses; in short, any sort of idleness never came amiss to these representatives of the old Troubadours. A tight oval cap covered his shaggy poll; he was clad in a coarse doublet or jerkin slashed in the fashion of the time, while his nether integuments were fastened in the primitive mode by a wooden skewer. He could conjure too, and play antics to set the folks agape; but as to his honesty, it was of that dubious sort that few cared to have it in trust. He was apt at these alehouse ditties, — many of them his own invention. He knew all the choicest ballads too, so that his vocation was much akin to the *jogleurs* or *jongleurs* of more ancient times, when Richard of the Lion's Heart and other renowned monarchs disdained not "*the gentle craft of poesie.*"

Wherever was a feast, let it be a wedding or a funeral, Tim, like the harpies of old, scented the meat, and some of his many vocations were generally in request.

This important functionary now stood whistling and singing by turns with the most admired unconcern.

"What's thy business here?" cried Gervase, approaching him.

"The maid was fair and the maid was coy,
But the lover left, and the maid said 'Why?'
Sing Oh, the green willow!"

"Answerest thou me with thy trumpery ditties? I'll have thee put i' the stocks, sirrah."

"Oh ha' mercy, master! there's naught amiss 'at I know. I'm but takin' roost here wi' the owls an' jackdaws a bit, may be for want o' better lyin'."

"It were hard to have a better knack at lying, than thou hast already. Hast gotten the weather into thy lodgings? When didst flit to thy new quarters?"

"Th' hay-mow at Clegg is ower savoured wi' the new crop, an' I want fresh air for my studies."

"Now art thou lying ——"

"Like a lover to his sweetheart," said Tim, interrupting him, and finishing the sentence.

"Peace, knave! There's some mischief i' the wind. Thou'rt after no good, I trow."

"What te dickons do I ail here? Is't aught 'at a man can lift off but stone wa's an' ivy-boughs? Marry, my little poke maun ha' summut else to thrive on nor these."

"There's been great outcry about poultry an' other farm-yard appendances amissing of late, besides eggs and such like dainties enow to furnish pancakes and fritters for the whole parish. Hast gotten company in thy den above there?"

"Jacks an' ouzles if ye like, Master Gervase. Clim' up, clim' up, lad, an' there'll be a prial on us. Ha, ha! What! our little sweetheart there would liefer t' be gangin'. Weel, weel, 'tis natural, as a body may say:

"One is good, and two is good,
But three's no company."

"Answer me quick, thou rogue. Is there any other but thyself yonder above?"

"When I'm there I'm not here, an' when I'm here ——"

"Sirrah, I'll flog the wind out o' thy worthless carcase. Hast any pilfering companions about thee? I do smell a savoury refection, — victuals are cooking, or my nose belies its office."

"Fair speech, friend, wins a quiet answer; a soft word and a smooth tongue all the world over. What for mayn't I sup as well as my betters?"

"As well? better belike. There's no such savour in our hall at eventide, nor in the best kitchen in the parish."

"It's not my fau't, is't?"

"By'r lady, there's somebody in the chamber there. I saw the leaves fluttering from the loophole. Villain, who bears thee company?"

"Daft, daft. What fool would turn in to roost wi' me? Clean gone crazy, sure as I'm livin'."

"Nay, nay, there's some plot here,—some mischief hatching. I'll see, or——"

He was just going to make the attempt; but Tim withstood him, and in a peremptory manner barred the way.

"How! am I barred by thee, and to my face?"

"It's no business o' thine, Master Gervase. What's hatching there, concerns not thee. Keep back, I say, or——"

"Ha! Thou jingle-pated rascal, stand off, or I'll wring thy neck round as I would a jackdaw."

"Do not, do not, Gervase!" said Grace Ashton, fearful of some unlucky strife. "Let us begone. We are too late already, and 'tis no business of ours."

"What! and be o'erfoughten by this scurvy lack-wit. Once more, who is there above?"

"An' what if I shouldn't tell thee?"

"I'll baste thy carcase to a mummy; I'll make thee tender for the hounds."

"Another word to that, master, an' it's a bargain."

"Let me pass."

"Not without my company."

He whistled, and in a moment Gervase felt himself pinioned from behind. Looking round, he saw two stout fellows with their faces covered; and any other possibility of recognition was impracticable in the heavy twilight.

"Who's i' t' stocks now?" cried the malicious rogue, laughing.

"Unhand me, or ye'll rue that ever ye wrought this outrage."

"Nay, nay, that were a pretty stave, when we've gotten the bird, to open the trap," said Tim.

Gervase immediately saw that another party had seized Grace Ashton. He raved and stamped until his maledictions were put an end to by an effectual gag, and he did not doubt

but she had suffered the same treatment, for a short sharp scream only was heard. Being immediately blindfolded, he could only surmise that her usage was of a similar nature.

He was so stupified with surprise, that for a short period he was hardly sensible to their further proceedings. When able to reflect, he found himself pinioned, and in a sitting posture. A damp chill was on his forehead. He had been dragged downwards, and, from the motion, steps were the medium of descent. A door or two had been raised or opened, a narrow passage previously traversed, and a short time only elapsed from the cool freshness of the evening air to the damp and stifling atmosphere that he now breathed. What could be cause of his seizure, he was quite incompetent to guess. He could not recollect that he had either pique or grudge on his hands; and what should be the result, he only bewildered and wearied himself by striving to anticipate.

It was surely a dream. He heard a voice of ravishing sweetness; such pure and silvery tones, that aught earthly could have produced it was out of the question; it was like the swell of some Eolian lyre,—words too, modifying and enhancing that liquid harmony. It was a hymn, but in a foreign tongue. He soon recognised the evening hymn to the Virgin:

“*Mater amata, intemerata,
Ora, ora, pro nobis.*”

So sweetly did the music melt into his soul, that he quite forgot his thrall, and every sense was attuned to the melody. When the sound ceased, he made an effort to get free. He loosened his hands, and immediately tore off the bandage from his eyes. A few seconds elapsed, when he saw a light streaming through a crevice. Looking through, he saw a taper burning before a little shrine, where two females in white raiment, closely veiled, were kneeling.

The celebration of such rites, at that time strictly prohibited, sufficiently accounted for their concealment, and plainly intimated that the parties were not of the Reformed faith.

By the light which penetrated his cell from this source, he saw it was furnished with a stone bench, and a narrow flight of steps in one corner communicated with a trap-door above.

The old mansion at Belfield, contiguous to these ruins, once belonging to the Knights of St. John, had been for some years untenanted, and, as often happens to the lot of deserted houses, strange noises, sights, and other manifestations of ghostly occupants were heard and seen by passers-by, rendering it a neighbourhood not overliked by those who had business that way after nightfall.

Gervase Buckley was pretty well assured that he had been conveyed into some concealed subterranean chamber, but for what purpose he could not comprehend. He was not easily intimidated; and, though in a somewhat sorry plight, he now felt little apprehension on the score of supernatural visitations: but his seizure did not hold out an immunity as regards corporeal disturbers. He had not long to indulge these premonitory reflections ere a door was opened. A figure, completely enveloped in a black cloak, on which a red cross was conspicuously emblazoned, stood before him. He carried a torch, and Gervase saw a short naked sword glittering in his belt.

"Follow me," said the intruder; and, without further parley, pointed to where another door was concealed in the pavement. This being opened, Gervase beheld, not without serious apprehension, a flight of steps evidently communicating with a lower dungeon. His conductor pointed to the descent, and it would have been useless folly to disobey. A damp and almost suffocating odour prevailed, as though from some long pent up atmosphere, which did not give the

prisoner any increasing relish or affection for the enterprise. He looked at his conductor, whose face and person were yet covered. Had he been a familiar of the Holy Inquisition, he could not have been more careful of concealment. Gervase looked now and then with a wistful glance towards his companion's weapon. Being himself unarmed, it would have been madness to attempt escape. He merely inquired in his descent,

"Whence this outrage? I am unarmed, defenceless." But there was no reply. The guide, with an inclination of the head, pointed with his torch to the gulph his victim was about to enter. There was little use in disputation where the opposite party had so decided an advantage, and he thought it best to abide the issue without further impediment. He accordingly descended a few steps. His conductor fastened the door overhead, and they soon arrived at the bottom, at a low arched passage, where his guide dashed his flambeau against the wall, and it was immediately extinguished.

Gervase was left once more in doubt and darkness. There was little space for explanation. He felt himself seized by an invisible hand, hurried unresistingly on, till, without any preparation, a blaze of light burst upon him.

It was for a moment too overpowering to enable him to distinguish objects with any certainty. Soon, however, he saw a tolerably spacious vault, or crypt, supported by massy pillars. He had often heard there existed many unexplored subterranean passages reaching to an incredible distance, made originally by the Knights Templars for their private use. One of these, it was said, extended even to the chantry just then dissolved at Milnrow, more than a mile distant. Many strange stories he had been told of these warrior monks. But centuries had elapsed since their suppression. For a moment, he almost believed they were permitted to re-appear, doomed at stated periods to re-enact their unhallowed orgies, their cruelties and their crimes. The

chamber was lighted by three or four torches, their lurid unsteady light giving an ever-varying character to the surrounding objects.

Opposite the entrance was a stone bench, occupied by several figures attired in a similar manner to his conductor. An individual in the centre wore in addition a belt, covered by some cabalistic devices. The scene was sufficiently inexplicable, and not at all elucidated by the following interrogation:

"Thou hast been cited to our tribunal," said the chief inquisitor.

"I know ye not," said Gervase with great firmness, though hardly aware of the position he occupied.

"Why hast thou not obeyed our summons?"

"I have not heard of any such; nor in good sooth should I have been careful to obey had your mandate been delivered."

"Croix Rouge," said the interrogator; 'has this delinquent been cited?"

The person he addressed arose, bowed, and presented a written answer.

"I have here," continued the chief, "sufficient proof that our summons hath been conveyed to thee, and that hitherto thine answer hath been contumaciously withheld. What sayest thou?"

"I have yet to learn, firstly," said Gervase, with more indignation than prudence, "by what authority ye would compel me to appear; and, secondly, how and in what form such mandate hath been sent?"

"Bethink thee, is our answer to the last,—the first will be manifested in due time. We might indeed leave thee ignorant as to what we require, but pity for thy youth and inexperience forbids. Clegg Hall is, thou knowest, along with the estate, now unlawfully holden by the Ashtons."

"I know that sundry Popish recusants plotting the over-

throw of our most gracious Queen, do say that other and more legitimate rights are in abeyance only; but the present owners are too well fortified to be dispossessed by hearsay."

"In the porch at Clegg thou wast accosted not long ago by a mendicant who solicited an alms."

"Probably so."

"Did he not hold out to thee the sign of the Rosy Cross, the token of our all-powerful fraternity of Rosicrucians?"

"I do remember such a signal; and furthermore, I drove him forth as an impostor and a pretender to forbidden arts."

"He showed thee the sign, and bade thee follow."

"He did."

"And why was our summons disobeyed?"

"Because I have yet to learn what authority you possess either for my summons or detention."

"The brotherhood of the Red Cross are not disobeyed with impunity."

"I have heard of such a fraternity,—as well too that they be idle cheats and lying impostors."

"We challenge not belief without sufficient testimony to the truth of our mission. In pity to man's infirmity this indulgence is permitted. We unfold the hidden operations, the very arcana of Nature, whom we unclothe as it were to her very nakedness. Our doctrines thereby carry credence even to the most impious and unbelieving. Ere we command thy submission, it is permitted to behold some manifestation of our power. By means derived from the hidden essences of Nature, the first principles which renovate and govern all things, the very elements of which they consist, we arrive at the incorporeal essence called spirit, holding converse with it undebased, uninfluenced by the intervention of matter. Thus we converse in spirit with those that be absent, even though they were a thousand leagues apart."

"And what has this jargon to do with my being dispatched hither?"

"Listen, and reply not; the purport will be vouchsafed to thee anon. We can compel the spirits even of the absent to come at our bidding by subtle spells that none have power to disobey. We too can renew and invigorate life, and by the universal solvent bring about the renovation of all things,—renovation and decay being the two antagonist principles, as light and darkness. As we can make darkness light, and light darkness at our pleasure, so can we from decay bring forth life, and the contrary. Seest thou this dead body?"

A black curtain he had not hitherto observed, was thrown aside, and he beheld the features of Grace Ashton, or he was strangely deceived. She was lying on a little couch, death visibly imprinted on her collapsed and sunken features.

"Murderers! I will have ye dealt with for this outrage." Maddened almost to frenzy he would have rushed towards her, but he was firmly holden by a power superior to his own.

"She is now in the first region of departed spirits," said the chief. "We have power to compel answer to our interrogatories. Listen, perverse mortal. We are well assured that a vast treasure is concealed hereabouts, hidden by the Knights of St. John. 'Tis beyond our unassisted power to discover. We have asked counsel of one whom we dare not disobey, and she it is hath commanded that we cite thee and Grace Ashton to the tribunal of the Rosy Cross. This corporeal substance now before us, by reason of its intimate union with the spirit, purged from the dross of mortality, will answer any question that may be propounded, and will utter many strange and infallible prophecies. It will solve doubtful questions, and discourse of things past, present, and to come, seeing that she is now in spirit where all knowledge is perfect, and hath her eyes and understanding

cleared from the gross film of our corruption. But as spirit only hath power over those of its own nature, by the law of universal sympathy, so she answers but to those by whom she is bidden, that are of the same temperament and affinity, which is shown by your affiance and love toward each other."

The prisoner heard this mystic harangue with a vacant and fixed expression, as though his mind were wandering, and he hardly understood the profundity of the discourse. Every feeling was absorbed in the conviction that some horrid incantation had for ever deprived him of his beloved. Then he fancied some imposition had been practised upon him. Being prevented from a closer examination, at length he felt some relief in the idea that the form he beheld might possibly be a counterfeit. He knew not what to say, and the speaker apparently waited his reply. Finding he was still silent, the former continued after a brief space :

"Our questions to this purport must necessarily be propounded by thee. Art thou prepared?"

"Say on," said Gervase, determined to try the issue; however repugnant to his thoughts.

Two of them now arose and stood at each end of the couch. The superior first made the sign of the Cross. He then drew a book from his girdle, and read therein a Latin exorcism against the intrusion of evil spirits into the body, commanding those only of a heavenly and benign influence to attend. He lighted a taper compounded of many strange ingredients emitting a fragrant odour, and, as the smoke curled heavily about him, flickering and indistinct, he looked like some necromancer about to perform his diabolical rites.

The occupant of that miserable couch lay still as death.

"The first question," cried out the chief; and he looked towards the prisoner, who was now suffered to approach within a few paces of the bed.

"Is there treasure in this place?"

Gervase tried to repeat the question, but his tongue clave to his mouth. For the first time probably in his life he felt the sensation of horrible, undefined, uncontrollable fear, — that fear of the unknown and supernatural, that shrinking from spiritual intercourse even with those we have loved best. It seemed as though he were in communion with the invisible world, — that awful, incomprehensible state of existence; and with beings whose power and essence are yet unknown, armed, in imagination, with attributes of terror and of vengeance.

With a desperate effort, however, he repeated the question. Breathless, and with intense agony, he awaited the response. It came! A voice, not from the lips of the recumbent victim, but as though it were some inward afflatus, hollow and sepulchral. The lips did not move, but the following reply was given.

“There is!”

Even the guilty confederates started back in alarm at the success of their own experiment. All was, however, still, — silent as before.

Taking courage, the next question was put in like manner.

“In what direction?”

“Under the main pillar at the south-eastern corner of the vault.”

After another pause, the following questions were asked:

“How may we obtain the treasure sought?”

“By diligence and perseverance.”

“At what time?”

“When the moon hath trine to Mercury in the house of Saturn.”

“Is it guarded?”

“It is.”

“By whom?”

“By a power that shall crush you unless propitiated.”

"Show us in what manner."

"I may not; my lips are sealed. That power is superior to mine; the rest is hidden from me."

The treasure-seekers were silent, as though disappointed at this unexpected reply. Another attempt was, however, made.

"Shall we prosper in our undertaking?"

"My time is nigh spent. I beseech you that I may depart, for I am in great torment."

"Thou shalt not, until thou answer."

"Beware!"

But this admonition was from another source, and in a different direction. The obscurity and smoke from the torches made it impossible to judge with any certainty whence the interruption proceeded.

Gervase started and turned round. It might be fancy, but he was confident the features of the Red Woman were present to his apprehension. Horrors were accumulating. Even the united brotherhood seemed to tremble as though in the presence of some being of whom they stood in awe. They awaited her approach in silence.

"Fool! did I not warn thee to do *my* bidding only? And thou art hankering again, pampering thy cruel lust for gold. How darest thou question the maiden for this intent? Hence, and thank thy stars thou art not even now sent howling to thy doom!"

This terrible and mysterious woman came forward in great anger, and the Rosicrucian brotherhood were thereby in great alarm. "The maid is mine — begone!" said she, pointing the way.

Like slaves under their master's frown, they crouched before this fearful personification of their unhallowed and forbidden practices, and departed.

"Gervase Buckley," she cried, "thou art betrothed to the heiress of yon wide possessions."

"I am," said he, roused either to courage or desperation, even in the presence of a being whose power he felt conscious was not derived from one common source with his own.

"Dost thou confirm thy troth?"

"I do; in life and in death she is mine."

"Pledge thyself, body and soul, to her."

"I am hers whilst I live, body and soul. Nothing but death shall part us."

"On thy soul's hope thou wilt fulfil this pledge!"

"I will." Gervase looked wistfully towards his beloved. The inanimate form was yet pale and still; but a vague hope possessed him that the witch would again quicken her.

"'Tis enough. But it must be sealed with blood!"

He felt her clammy hand on his arm, and a sharp pain as though from a puncture. He quickly withdrew it, and a blood-drop fell on the floor.

"Thou art mine — for ever!"

A loud yell rang through the vaults, and Gervase felt as though the doom of the lost spirits were his, — that a whole troop of fiery demons had assailed him, and that he was borne away to the pit of torment. Happily his recollection forsook him, and he became unconscious of future suffering.

PART THE SECOND.

Morning rose bright and ruddy above the hills. The elder Buckley was up and stirring betimes. Agreeably to his usual practice, he had retired early to bed, leaving the household cares and duties to his helpmate. He was sitting in the porch, when his dame, with a disturbed and portentous aspect, accosted him :—

“I know not what hath come to the lad.”

“Gervase — what of him ?” said Nicholas, carelessly.

“He came home very late yesternight. But he did not speak, and he looked so wan and woe-begone, that I verily thought he had seen a ghost or some uncanny thing yonder on his road home. I’ve just now been to rouse him, but he will not answer. Prithee go and get speech of him, good or bad. I think i’ my heart the lad’s bewitched.”

Nicholas Buckley was a man of few words, especially in the presence of his helpmate, so he merely groaned out an incredulous wonder, and went off as he was bidden. He saw Gervase evidently under the influence of some stupefying spell. His eyes were open, but he noticed neither the question nor the person who accosted him. There was something so horrible and mysterious in his whole appearance, that the good man felt alarmed, and went back to his dame with all possible expedition. What *could* have happened? They guessed, and made a thousand odd surmises, improbable enough the greater part, but all merging in the prevailing bugbear of the day — witchcraft, which was resorted to as a satisfactory explanation under every possible difficulty. Had his malady any connection with the unexpected appearance of the Red Woman and the ring? It was safe buried, however, and that was a comfort. But after all, her thoughts always involuntarily recurred to this unpleasant subject. She could not shake off her suspicions, and

there was little use in attempting further measures unless she could fight the Evil One with his own weapons. To this end, she began to cast about for some cunning wizard, who might countervail the plots of this malicious witch.

Now at this period, Dr. Dee, celebrated for his extraordinary revelations respecting the world of spirits, had been promoted by Queen Elizabeth (a firm believer in astrology and other recondite pursuits) to the wardenship of the Collegiate Church at Manchester. His fame had spread far and wide. He had not long been returned from his mission to the Emperor Rodolph at Prague, and his intercourse with invisible things was as firmly believed as the common occurrences of the day, and as well authenticated.

The character of Dee has both been underrated and misunderstood. By most, if not all, he has been looked upon merely as a visionary and an enthusiast,—credulous and ambitious, without the power, though he had sufficient will, to compass the most mischievous designs. But under these outward weaknesses and superstitions, tintured and modified by the prevailing belief in supernatural interferences, there was a bold and vigorous mind, frustrated, it is true, by circumstances which he could not control. Dee aimed at the entire change and subjugation of affairs, ecclesiastical and political, to the dominion of an unseen power,—a theocracy or millenium,—himself the sole medium of communication, the high priest and lawgiver. To this end he sought the alliance and support of foreign potentates; and his diary published by Casaubon, the original of which is in the British Museum, is a remarkable and curious detail of the intrigues resorted to for this purpose. His mission to the Emperor Rodolph, offering him the sceptre of universal dominion, is told with great minuteness; and there is little doubt that Elizabeth herself did not disdain to converse and consult with him on this extraordinary project. Her visits to his house at Mortlake are well known. He had been

consulted as to a favourable day for her coronation, and received many splendid promises of preferment, that were never realised. At length, disappointed and hopeless as to the success of his once daring expectations, he settled down to the only piece of preferment within his reach, to wit, the wardenship of the Collegiate Church at Manchester, where he arrived with his family in the beginning of February, 1596. His advice and assistance were much resorted to, and particularly in cases of supposed witchcraft and demoniacal possession, — articles of unshaken belief at that period with all but speculatists and optimists, the Sadducees of their day and generation. His chief colleague throughout his former revelations had been one Edward Kelly, born at Worcester, where he practised as an apothecary. In his diary, Dee says, they were brought together by the ministration of the angel Uriel. He was called Kelly the Seer. This faculty of "*seeing*" by means of a magic crystal not being possessed by the Doctor, he was obliged to have recourse to Kelly, who had or pretended to have this rare faculty. Afterwards, however, he found out that Kelly had deceived him; those spirits which ministered at his bidding not being messengers from the Deity as he once supposed, but lying spirits sent to deceive and to betray.

Kelly was an undoubted impostor, though evidently himself a believer in magic and the black art. Addicted to diabolical and mischievous practices, he was a fearful example of those deluders given up to their own inventions to believe the very lies wherewith they attempted to deceive.

He was a great treasure-hunter and invoker of demons, and, it is said, would not scruple to have recourse to the most disgusting brutalities for the gratification of his avarice and debauchery. In Weaver's *Funereal Monuments*, it is recorded that Kelly, in company with one Paul Waring, went to the churchyard of Walton-le-Dale, near Preston, where a person was interred at that time supposed to have

hidden a large sum of money, and who had died without disclosing the secret. They entered precisely at midnight, the grave having been pointed out to them the preceding day. They dug down to the coffin, opened it, and exorcised the spirit of the deceased, until the body rose from the grave and stood upright before them. Having satisfied their inquiries, it is said that many strange predictions were uttered concerning divers persons in the neighbourhood, which were literally and remarkably fulfilled.

At the date of our legend, Kelly had been parted from the Doctor for a considerable time. The Doctor having found out his proneness to these evil courses, Kelly bore no good will to his former patron and associate.

We have not space, or it would be an interesting inquiry, as connected with the superstitions of our ancestors, to trace the character and career of these individuals—men once famous amongst their cotemporaries, forming part of the history of those times, and exerting a permanent influence, immediately on the national character, and remotely on that of a future and indefinite period.

Dame Eleanor Buckley was morally certain, firstly, that her son was witched; and, secondly, that no time should be lost in procuring relief. Nicholas therefore took horse for Manchester that very forenoon, with the intention of consulting the learned Doctor above named, on his son's malady. Ere he left, however, there came tidings that Grace Ashton had not returned home, and was supposed to have tarried at Buckley for the night.

Trembling at this unexpected news, the dame once more applied to her son. He was still wide awake on the couch, in the same position, and apparently unconscious of her presence. In great anxiety she conjured him to say if he knew what had befallen Grace Ashton.

"She is dead!" was his reply, in a voice strangely altered from his usual careless and happy tone. Nothing further,

however, could be drawn from him, but shortly after there came one with additional tidings.

"Inquiry has been set on foot," said the messenger, "and Tim, well known at wakes and merry-makings, doth come forward with evidence which justifies a suspicion that is abroad, to wit, that she has met death by some unfair dealing; and, further, he scruples not to throw out dark and mysterious hints that implicate your son as being privy to her disappearance."

At this unlooked for intelligence, the mother's fortitude gave way. Tribulation and anguish had indeed set in upon them like a flood. The ring, so unaccountably brought back by the Red Woman, was beyond doubt the cause of all their misfortunes—its reappearance, as she anticipated, being the harbinger of misery. What should be the next arrow from her quiver she trembled to forebode. But, in the midst of this fever of doubt and apprehension, one hope sustained her, and that was, the result of her husband's mission to Doctor Dee, who would doubtless find out the nature of the spell, and relieve them from its curse.

Let us follow the traveller to Dee's lodgings in the deanery, where at that time this renowned astrologer was located. Nicholas Buckley found him sitting in a small dismal looking study, where he was introduced with little show either of formality or hesitation. The Doctor was now old, and his sharp, keen, grey eyes had suffered greatly by reason of rheum and much study. Pale, but of a pleasant countenance, his manner, if not so grave and sedate as became one of his deep and learned research, yet displaying a vigour and vivacity, the sure intimation of that quenchless ardour, the usual concomitant of all who are destined to eminence, or to any conspicuous part in the age on which they are thrown,—not idle worthless weeds on the strand of time, but landmarks or beacons in the ocean of life, to warn or to direct.

He was short in stature, and somewhat thin. A rusty black velvet cap, without ornament, surmounted his forehead, from which a few straggling grey hairs crept forth, rivalling his pale, thoughtful brow in whiteness.

He sat in a curiously embossed chair, with a brown-black leathern cushion, beside an oaken table or tressel, groaning under the weight of many ponderous volumes of all hues and subjects. Divers and occult were the tractates there displayed, and unintelligible save to the initiated. Alchemy was just then his favourite research, and he was vainly endeavouring to master the jargon under which its worthlessness and folly were concealed.

Nicholas Buckley related his mishap, and, as far as he was able, the circumstances connected with it. The Doctor then erected a horoscope for the hour. After consulting this he said :

“I will undertake for thee, if so be that my poor abilities, hitherto sorely neglected, and I may say despised, can bring thee any succour. Indeed the land groans by reason of the sin of witchcraft,—a noisome plague now infesting this afflicted realm, and a grievous scandal to the members and ministers of our Reformed Church. The ring is of a surety bewitched, and by one more powerful and wicked than thou canst possibly imagine. I tell thee plainly, that unless the charm be broken, the recovery of the young man were vain,—nay, in all likelihood, thine own ruin will be the result.”

The merchant groaned audibly at this doleful news. He thought upon his merchandise and his adventures o’er sea—his treasures and his argosies, committed to the tender mercies of the deep ; and he recounted them in brief.

“Cannot these be rescued from such disaster?” inquired he, dolefully.

“I know not yet,” was the reply. “Saturn, that hath his location here, governing these expected treasures, now beholds

the seventh house of the figure I have just erected, with a quartile aspect. They be evil tokens, but as regards this same Mother Red Cap or the Red Woman, who hath doubtless brought you into grievous trouble, I know her. Nay, look not incredulous. How, it is not needful to inquire. Suffice it that she hath great power, though from a different source from mine. She is of the Rosicrucian order, one of the sisters, of which there are five throughout Europe and Asia. They have intercourse with spirits, communicating too with each other, though at never so great a distance, by means of this mystical agency. She hath been here, aye, even in the very place where thou sittest."

The visitor started from his chair.

"And I am not ignorant of her devices. She is of a Papistical breed; and the recusant priests, if I mistake not, are at the working of some diabolical plot; it may be against the life and government of our gracious Queen! They would employ the devil himself, if need were, to compass their intent. She hath travelled much, and doubtless hath learned marvellous secrets from the Moors and Arabian doctors. It is however little to the purpose at present, that we continue this discourse. What more properly concerns thee is how to get rid of this grievous visitation; which, unless removed, will of a surety fall out to thine undoing. By prayer and fasting much may be accomplished, together with the use of all lawful means for thy release."

"Alas!" said Buckley, "I fear me there is little hope of a favourable issue, and I may not be delivered from this wicked one!"

"Be of good heart—we will set to work presently, and, if it be possible, counterplot this cunning witch. But to this end it is needful that I visit the young man, peradventure we may gather tidings of her. I know not any impediment to my journey this very day. Aye! even so," said he, poring over some unimaginable diagrams. "Good! there is

a marvellous proper aspect for our enterprise thirty minutes after midnight. Thou hast doubtless taken horse with thy servant hither. I will take his place and bear thee company."

The Doctor was soon equipped for travel, much to the comfort of the afflicted applicant, who was like to have taken his departure with a sorry heart, and in great disquietude. On their arrival at Buckley, Dee would needs see the patient instantly. No change had taken place since morning, and he still refused any sustenance that might be offered. The Doctor examined him narrowly, but refrained from pronouncing on his case.

It was now evening. The sun shot a languid and fitful ray athwart the vapours gathering to receive him, and its light shone full on the couch of the invalid. The astrologer was sitting apart, in profound meditation. Dame Eleanor suddenly roused him.

"He has just asked for the Red Woman," said she, "and I heard him bemoaning himself, saying that he is betrothed to her, and that she will come ere long to claim his pledge. Hark, he mutters again!"

Dee immediately went to the bedside.

"I did not kill her," said the victim, shuddering. He dashed the cold sweat from his forehead with some violence. He then started up. "Is she come?" said he in a low, hollow voice, and he sat up in the attitude of intense expectation. "Not yet, not yet," he uttered with great rapidity, and sank down again as though exhausted.

A stormy and lowering sky now gathered above the sun's track, and the chamber suddenly grew dark. The inmates looked as though expecting some terrific, some visible manifestation of their tormentor. Dee looked out through the window. There was nothing worthy of remark, save an angry heap of clouds, rolling and twisting together, the sure forerunner of a tempest.

"The whole country is astir," said Dame Eleanor. "They are seeking for the body of Grace Ashton in pits and secret places. Woe is me that I should live to see the day;—the poor lad there is loaden with curses, and fearful threatenings are uttered against us. We are verily in jeopardy of our lives."

Hereat she fell a weeping, and truly it was piteous to behold.

"We must first get an answer from him," said the Doctor, "ere measures can be devised for his recovery."

"'Tis said there will be a warrant for his apprehension on the morrow," said the elder Buckley.

"There is some terrible perplexing mystery, if not knavery in this matter," said Dee; "and I have been thinking, nay I more than suspect, that rascal Kelly hath a hand in it. He is ever hankering after forbidden arts, and many have fallen the innocent victims to his diabolical intrigues. He hath become a great adept of late, too, as I am told, in this Rosicrucian philosophy; and, if we have here a clue to our labyrinth, depend on it we'll get to the end speedily. To spite and frustrate that juggling cheat, I will spare neither pains nor study; though, of a surety, we only use lawful and appointed means. Prayers and exorcisms must be resorted to, and help craved from a higher source than theirs."

At length the forms and usages generally resorted to on such occasions were entered upon. Loud and fervent were the responses, continuing even to a late hour, but without producing any change.

The wind, hitherto rushing only in short fierce gusts through the valley, now gathered in loud heavy lunges against the corner of the house, almost extinguishing the solitary light on the table near to which Dee sat; the casements rattled, and the whole fabric shook as they passed by. At length there came a lull, fearful in its very

silence, as though the elements were gathering strength for one mighty onslaught. On it came like an overwhelming surge, and for a moment threatened them with immediate destruction. Dust, pebbles, and dead branches were flung on the window as though bursting through, to the great terror of the inmates. Again it drew back, and there was stillness so immediate, it was even more appalling than the loudest assaults of the tempest. The household, too, were silent. Even Dee was evidently disturbed, and as though in expectation of some extraordinary occurrence.

A sharp quick tapping was heard at the casement.

"What is that?" was the general inquiry. Gervase evidently heard it too, and was, apparently, listening.

Dee arose. He went slowly towards the window, as if carefully scrutinising what might present itself. He put his face nearly close to the glass, and manifestly beheld some object which caused him to draw back. His forehead became puckered by intense emotion, either from surprise or alarm. He put one finger on his brow, as though taking counsel from his own thoughts, deliberating for a moment what course to pursue. At length, much to the astonishment of his companions, he opened the latch of the casement, when, with a dismal croak, a raven came hopping in. With outstretched wings he jumped down on the floor, and would have gone direct to the bed, but the Doctor caught him, and by main force held him back.

Fluttering and screaming, the bird made every effort to escape, but not before Dee was aware of a label tied round his neck. This he quickly detached; after which the winged messenger flew back through the open window, either having finished his errand, or not liking his entertainment. Dee opened the billet—a bit of parchment—and out dropped the ring! In the envelope was a mystical scroll, encompassed with magic emblems, wherein was

written the following doggrel, either in blood or coloured so as to represent it:—

“By this ring a charm is wound,
Rolling darkly round and round,
Ne’er beginning—ending never,
Woe betide this house for ever !
Thou art mine through life—in death
I’ll receive thy latest breath.
Plighted is thy vow to me,
Mine thy doom, thy destiny,
Sealed with blood ; this endless token,
Like the spell, shall ne’er be broken.”

Alarm was but too legible on the Doctor’s brow. He was evidently taken by surprise. He read it aloud, while fearful groans responded from the victim.

“’Tis a case of grievous perplexity,” said he, “and I am sore distraught. If he have sworn his very soul to her, as this rhyme doth seem to intimate, I am miserably afflicted for his case. Doubtless ’tis some snare which hath unwillingly been thrown about him. Nevertheless, I will diligently and warily address myself to the task, and Heaven grant us a safe deliverance. Yet I freely own there is both danger and extremity in the attempt. She will doubtless appear and claim the fulfilment of his pledge. But I must cope with her alone ; none else may witness the conflict. It is not the first time that I have battled with the powers of darkness.”

“But what motive hath she for this persecution? it is not surely out of sheer malice,” said the dame, weeping.

“Belike not,” replied Dee, thoughtfully. “It doth savour of those incantations whereof I oft read in divers tractates, whereby she expects to gain advantage or deliverance if she sacrifice another victim to the demon whereunto she hath sold herself. Indeed, we hear of some whose tenure of life can only be renewed by the yearly substitution of

another; and it is to this possible danger that our feeble efforts must be directed. But I trust in aid stronger than the united hosts of the Prince of Darkness. This very night, I doubt not, will come the final struggle."

The wind was now still, but ever and anon bursts of hail hurtled on the window. Thunder growled in the distance, waxing louder and louder, until its roar might have appalled the stoutest heart.

With many anxious wishes and admonitions the distressed parents left the Doctor to himself.

He took from his pocket an hour-glass, a bible, and a Latin translation from the Arabic, being a treatise on witches, genii, demons, and the like, together with their symbols, method of invocation, and many other subjects equally useful. Intent on his studies, he hardly looked aside save for the purpose of turning the glass, when he immediately became absorbed as before.

Now and then he cast a glance towards the bed. His patient lay perfectly quiet, but the Doctor fancied he was listening.

About midnight he heard a groan; he shut his book, and, looking aside, beheld the terrible eye and aspect of the Red Woman glaring fiercely upon him. She had, in all likelihood, been concealed somewhere within hearing; for a closet door, on one side of the chamber, stood open as though she had just issued from it.

With great presence of mind he adjured her that she should declare her errand.

"I am here on my master's business; mine errand concerns not thee," was the reply. Her terrible eyes glanced, as she spoke, towards the bed where the unfortunate Gervase Buckley lay writhing as though in torment.

"By what compact or agreement is he thine, foul sorceress? Knowest thou not that there are bounds beyond which ye cannot prevail?"

"He hath sworn — the compact is sealed with blood, and must be fulfilled. I am here to claim mine own ; and it is at thy peril thou prevent me."

"I fear thee not, but am prepared to withstand *thee* and all thy works."

"Beware ! There's a black drop in thine own cup," said she. "Thou thyself hast sought counsel by forbidden arts, and I can crush thee in a moment."

Dee looked as though vanquished on the sudden. He was not altogether clear from this charge, having, though at Kelly's instigation, been led somewhat further than was advisable into practices which in his heart he condemned. He, however, now felt convinced that Kelly had some hand in the business, knowing too that he would associate with the most wicked and abandoned, if so be that he might compass his greedy and unhallowed desire.

"Depart whilst thou may," she continued. "I warn thee. Yonder inheritance is mine, though the silly damsel they have lost be the reputed heir. Aforetime I have told thee. Wronged of our rights, I have sold myself, aye body and soul, for revenge ! By unjust persecutions we have been proscribed, those of the true faith have been forced to fly, and even our lands and our patrimony given to yon graceless heretics."

"But why persecute this unoffending house? — they have not done *thee* wrong."

"It is commanded — the doom must be fulfilled. One condition only was appointed. A hard task, to wit—but what cannot power and ingenuity compass? — 'When one shall pledge himself thine and for ever, then the inheritance thou seekest is thine also, which none shall take from thee. But he too must be rendered up to me.' This was the doom ! 'Tis fulfilled. He hath pledged himself body and soul, and that ring, if need be, is witness to his troth."

"Is Grace Ashton living or dead?" inquired Dee, with a firm and penetrating glance.

"When he hath surrendered to his pledge it shall be told thee."

"Wicked sorceress," said the Doctor, rising in great anger, "he shall not be thy victim; thine arts shall be countervailed. The powers of darkness are not, in the end, permitted to prevail, though for a time their devices seem to prosper. Listen, and answer me truly, or I will compel thee in such wise that thou dardest not disobey. Was there none other condition to thy bond?"

The weird woman here broke forth into a laugh so wild and scornful, that the arch-fiend himself could hardly have surpassed it in malice.

"Fret not thyself," she said, "and I will tell thee. Know then I am scathless from all harm until that feeble ring shall be able to bind me; none other bonds may prevail."

"This ring bind thee?"

"Even so—and as a blade of grass I could rend it! Judge then of my safety. Fire, air, and water—all the elements—cannot have the power to hurt me; I hold a charmed life. The price is paid!"

Dee looked curiously round the little thin ring which he held, and indeed it were hopeless to suppose so frail a fetter could restrain her.

"Thou hast told me the truth?"

"I have—on my hope of prospering in this pursuit of our patrimony."

"And what is thy purpose with the lad?"

"I have need of him. He is my hostage to him whom I serve."

"Thou wilt not take him by force?"

"I will not. He will follow whithersoever I lead. He has neither will nor power to disobey."

"Grant a little space I prithee. 'Tis a doleful doom for one so young."

"To-morrow my time hath expired. Either he or I must be surrendered to ——" Here she pointed downwards.

"Agreed. To-morrow, at this hour. We will be prepared."

The witch unwillingly departed as she came. The closet door was shut as with a violent gust of wind, after which Dee sat pondering deeply on the matter, but unable to come to any satisfactory conclusion. He never suspected for one moment, what in this evil and matter-of-fact generation would have occurred even to the most credulous, to wit, that either insanity or fanaticism, aided by fortuitous events, if we may so speak, was the cause of this delusion, at least to the unhappy woman now the object of Dee's most abstruse speculations. His thoughts, however, would often recur to his quondam associate Kelly, and, if in the neighbourhood, which he suspected, an interview with him might possibly be of use, and afford some clue to guide their proceedings.

Committing himself to a short repose, he determined to make diligent search for this mischievous individual, — having comforted in some measure the unhappy couple below stairs, who were in a state of great apprehension lest their son had already fallen a victim, and were ready to give up all for lost.

Early on the ensuing day, the Doctor bent his steps towards Clegg Hall, whence the old family of that name had been dispossessed, and from whom that mysterious individual, the Red Woman, claimed descent.

The air was fresh and bracing after the night's tempest. Traces of its fury, however, were plainly visible. Huge trees had been swept down, as though some giant hand had crushed them. Rising the hill towards Belfield, he stayed a moment to look round him. There was something in the loneliness and desertion of the spot that was congenial to

his thoughts. The rooks cawed round their ancient inheritance, but all was ruin and disorder. His curiosity was excited; he had sufficient local knowledge to remember it was once an establishment of the Knights of St. John some centuries before, and he remembered too, that, according to vulgar tradition, great riches were buried somewhere in the vaults. A thought struck him that it was not an unlikely spot for the operations of Master Kelly. Impressed with this idea, a notion was soon engendered that his errand need not carry him further. He drew near to the ivied archway beneath the tower. The mavis whistled for its mate, and the sparrow chirped amongst the foliage. All else was silent and apparently deserted. He entered the gateway. Inside, on the right hand, was a narrow flight of steps, and, impelled by curiosity, he clambered, though with some difficulty, into a dilapidated chamber above. Here the loopholes were covered with ivy, but it was unroofed, and the floor was strewn with rubbish, the accumulation of ages. Through a narrow breach at one corner he saw what had once been a concealed passage, evidently piercing the immense thickness of the walls, and leading probably to some secret chambers not ordinarily in use. He now heard voices below, and taking advantage thereby, crept into the passage, probably expecting to gather some news by listening to the visitors if they approached. Two of these ascended the broken steps, and every word was audible from his place of concealment. He instantly recognised the voice of Kelly. The other was a stranger.

"Ah, ah! old Mother Red Cap, I tell thee, says we can never get the treasure. By this good spade, and a willing arm to wit, the gold is mine, ere two hours older," said Kelly.

"I am terribly afeard o' these same bogarts," replied his companion. "T'owd an—'ll come sure enough among us, sure as my name's Tim, some time or another."

"Never fear, nunkey; thee knows what a lump I've promised thee; an' as for the old one, trust me for that, I can lay him in the Red Sea at any time. Haven't I and that old silly Doctor, who pretends forsooth to have conscience qualms when there's aught to be gotten, though as fond o' the stuff as any of us, — haven't we, I say, by conjurations and fumigations, raised and laid a whole legion o' them? Why, man, I'm as well acquainted with the kingdom of Beelzebub, and his ministers to boot, as I am with my own."

"Don't make sich an ugly talk about 'em, prithee, good sir. I thought I heard some'at there i' the passage, an' I think i' my heart I dar na face 'em again for a' th' gowd i' th' monks' cellar."

"Tush, fool! If we get hold on't now, it shall be ours, and none o' the rest of our brethren o' the Red Cross need share, thee knows. But thou be'st but newly dubbed, an' hardly initiated yet in our sublime mysteries. Nevertheless, I will be indifferent honest too, and for thy great services to us and to our cause, I do promise thee a largess, when it comes to our fingers, — that is to say, one-fifth to thee, and one-fifth to me; the other three shares do go to the general treasure-house of the community, of which I take half."

"A goodly portion, marry — but I'd liefer t' not gang ony further."

"Villain! thou art bent on treachery; if thou draw back, I'll ha' thee hanged, or otherwise punished for what thou hast done. Remember, knave, thou art in my power."

The guilty victim groaned piteously, but he was irretrievably entangled. The toils had been spread by a master hand. He saw the gulf to which he was hurried, but could not extricate himself.

"Yonder women, plague take 'em," said Tim; "what's up now? I know this owd witch who's sold hersel' to — to a black face I'm afeard, is th' owner o' many a good rood o'

land hereabout, an' t'owd Ha' too, wi' its 'purtenances. But she's brought fro' Spain or Italy, as I be tou'd, a main lot o' these same priest gear; an' they're lurkin' hereabout like, loike rabbits in a warren, till she can get rid o' these Ashtons. Mony a year long past I've seen her prowling about, but she never could get her ends greedly till now."

"By my help, she shall," said Kelly; "it's a bargain between us. She's brought her grandchildren too, who left England in their youth, being educated in a convent o'er seas. They're just ready to drop into possession."

"But poor Grace Ashton, she's gi'en me mony a dish of hot porritch an' bannocks. She shauna be hurt, if I can help it."

"Fool! — the wench must be provided for. Look thee, — if she get away, she'll spoil all. When dead, young Buckley must be charged with the murder."

"Weel, weel; but I'll ha' nought more to do wi't. E'en tak' your own fling, — I'll wash my hands on't a'together, an' so ——"

"I want help, thou chicken-faced varlet, — come, budge, — to thy work; we may have helpers to the booty, if time be lost."

"Mercy on us!" said Tim, in great dolour, "I wish I had ne'er had aught to do wi' treasure-hunting an' sich like occupation. If ever I get rid of this job, if I don't stick to my old trade hang me up to dry."

"Hold thy peace, carrion! and remember, should a whisper even escape thee, I will have thee hanged in good earnest."

"Aye, aye; just like Satan 'ticing to iniquity, an' then, biggest rogue al'ays turns retriever."

"None o' thy pretences; thou hast as liquorish a longing after the gold as any miser in the parish, and when the broad pieces and the silver nobles jingle in thy fob, thoult' forget thy qualms, and thank me into the bargain. Now to work.

Let me see, what did the sleeping beauty say? Humph, — ‘Under the main pillar at the south-east corner.’ Good. Nay, man, don’t light up yet. Let us get fairly under ground first, for fear of accidents.”

To the great alarm of Dr. Dee, who heard every word, these two worthies came straight towards the opening. He drew on one side at a venture. Luckily, it proved the right one; they proceeded up the passage in the opposite direction. He heard them groping at the further end. A trap-door was evidently raised, and he was pretty well convinced they had found the way to the vaults; probably it had been blocked up for ages until recently, and, in all likelihood, Tim had pointed it out, as well as the notion that treasure was concealed somewhere in these labyrinths.

How to make this discovery in some way subservient to his mission was the next consideration; and with a firm conviction, generally the forerunner of success, he determined to employ some bold stratagem for their detection. They were now fairly in the trap, and he hoped to make sure of the vermin. For this end he cautiously felt his way to the opposite extremity of the passage, where he found the floor emitted a hollow sound. This was assuredly the entrance; but he tried in vain, — it resisted every effort. Here, however, he determined to keep watch and seize them if possible on their egress, trusting to his good fortune or his courage for help in any emergency that might ensue. At times he laid his ear to the ground, but nothing was audible as to their operations below. This convinced him they were at a considerable distance from the entry, but he felt assured that ere long they must emerge from their den, when, taken by surprise, he should have little difficulty in securing the first that came forth, keeping fast the door until he had made sure of his captive.

He watched patiently for some time, when all on a sudden he heard a rumbling subterraneous noise, and he

plainly felt the ground tremble under his feet. A loud shriek was heard below, and presently footsteps approaching the entrance. He had scarcely time to draw aside ere the door was burst open, and some one rushed forth. The Doctor seized him by the throat, and, ere he had recovered from his consternation, dragged him out of the passage.

"Villain! what is it ye are plotting hereabout? Confess, or I'll have thee dealt with after thy deserts."

"Oh!—I'll—tell—all—I will—" sobbed out the delinquent, gasping with terror. Tim, for it was none other, fell on his knees, crying for mercy. "Whoever thou art," continued he, "come and help—help for one that's fa'n under a heavy calamity. Bad though he be, we maunna let him perish for lack o' lookin' after."

"Has't got a light, knave?"

"I'll run an' fetch one."

"Nay, nay; we part not company until better acquainted. Is there not a candle below?"

"Alas! 'tis put out—and—oh! I'd forgotten; here's t' match box i' my pocket."

He drew forth the requisite materials, and they were soon equipped, exploring the concealed chambers we have before described. With difficulty they now found their way, by reason of the dust arising from the recent catastrophe. Dee followed cautiously on, keeping a wary eye on his leader lest some deceit or stratagem should be intended.

They now approached a heap of ruins almost choking the entrance to the larger vault. He thought groans issued from beneath.

"He's not dead yet," said Tim. "Here, here, good sir; help me to shift this stone first."

They set to work in good earnest, and, with no little difficulty and delay, at length succeeded in releasing the unfortunate treasure-hunter. Eager to possess the supposed

riches, they had incautiously undermined one of the main supports of the roof, and Kelly was buried under the ruins. Fortunately he lay in the hollow he had made, otherwise nothing but a miracle could have saved him from immediate death. He was terribly bruised, nevertheless, and presented a pitiable spectacle. Bleeding and sore wounded, he was hardly sensible as they bore him out into the fresh air. Apparently unable to move, they laid him on the ground until help could be obtained. In a while he recovered.

"Thou art verily incorrigible," said the Doctor to his former associate. "Where is the maiden ye have so cruelly conveyed away?"

But Kelly was dogged, and would not answer.

"I have heard and know all," continued Dee; "so that, unless thou wilt confess, assuredly I will have thee lodged in the next jail on accusation of the murder. Thy diabolical practices will, sooner or later, bring thee to punishment."

"Promise not to molest me," said Kelly, who feared nothing but the strong arm of the law, so utterly was he given over to a reprobate mind, even to commit iniquity with greediness.

"What! and let thee forth to compass other, and may be more heinous, mischief? I promise nothing, save that thou be prevented from such pursuits. Thou hast entered into covenant with the woman whom it is our purpose, in due time, to deliver up to the secular arm. Ye think to compass your mutual ends by this compact; but be assured your schemes shall be frustrated, and that speedily."

At this Kelly again fell into a sulky mood, maimed and helpless though he was; and revenge, dark and deadly, distorted his visage.

Tim here stepped forward.

"I do repent me of this iniquity, an' if ever I'm catched

meddlin' wi' sich tickle gear again, I'll gie ye leave to hang me up without judge or jury."

"The best proof of repentance is restitution," said the Doctor. "Knowest thou aught of the maiden?"

"I'll find her, if ye can keep that noisome wizard frae hurting me. He swears that if I tell, e'en by nods, winks, or otherwise, he'll send me to —— in a whirlwind."

"I will give thee my pledge, not a hair of thy head shall be damaged."

"He has the key in his pocket."

"What of that?"

"It's the key to the old house door yonder, an' she's either there, or but lately fetched away."

The Doctor proceeded, though not without opposition, to the search. The key was soon produced, and, accompanied by the repentant ballad-monger, he approached the mansion, which, as we have before noticed, was near at hand, apparently untenanted.

"Yonder knave, I think, cannot escape," said Dee.

"No, no," said his conductor, "unless some'at fetches him; he's too well hampered for that. His legs are aw smashed wi' that downfa'."

They entered a little court almost choked up with leaves and long grass. The door was unlocked, and a desolate scene presented itself. The hall was covered with damp and mildew, all was rotting in ruin and decay. Tim led the way up stairs. The same appearances were still manifest. The dark shadow of death seemed to brood there, — an interminable silence. They entered a small closet, nearly dark; and here, on a miserable pallet, lay the form of Grace Ashton! now, alas! pale and haggard. She seemed altogether unconscious of their presence. The horrid events of the preceding night had brought on mental as well as bodily disease. It was the practice of these treasure-seekers, either to raise up a dead body for the desired

information, or to throw the living into such a state of mental hallucination that they should answer dark and difficult questions whilst in that condition. It not unfrequently happened, however, that the unfortunate victims to these horrid rites either lost their lives or their reason during the experiment.

We will not pursue the recital in the present case: suffice it to say that Grace Ashton was immediately removed and placed under the care of her friends; the Doctor went back to Kelly for further disclosures, but what was his surprise to find that, by some means or another, he had escaped. He now lost no time in returning to Buckley, communicating the painful, though in some degree welcome, intelligence that Grace Ashton had been rescued from her persecutors.

It was now time to adopt measures for their reception of the witch, who would, doubtless, not fail in her appointment.

Dee was yet in doubt as to the issue, and he thought it needful to acquaint them with the only method by which the spell could be broken. How it were possible that the ring should ever bind her was a mystery that at present he could not solve. Dame Eleanor listened very attentively, then sharply replied, —

“I have heard o’ this charm aforetime, or — By’r Lady, but I have it!”

She almost capered for joy.

We will not, however, anticipate the result, but intreat our readers to suspend their guesses, and again accompany us to the chamber where lay the heir of Buckley, still grievously tormented.

Midnight again approached. Dee was sitting at the table, apparently in deep study. He had examined the closet, and found it communicated by another passage to an outer door; and it was through this that the Red

Woman had contrived to enter without being observed. The learned Doctor was evidently awaiting her approach with no little anxiety. Once or twice he fancied some one tapped at the casement,—but it was only the wind rushing by in stormy gusts, increasing in strength and frequency as the time drew nigh.

Hark! was not that a distant shriek? It might be the creaking of the boughs and the old yew-tree by the door, thought Dee; and again, in a while, he relapsed into a profound reverie. Another! He heard the jarring of rusty hinges; a heavy step; and—the Red Woman stood beside him!—but with such a malevolent aspect that he was somewhat startled and uneasy at her presence.

“I am beguiled of my prey!—mocked—thwarted. But beware, old man; thy meddling may prove dangerous. I will possess the inheritance, though every earthly power withstood me! That boy is mine. He hath sworn it—sealed it with his heart’s blood—and I demand the pledge.” The victim groaned. “Hearest thou that response?—’Tis an assent. He is mine in spite of your stratagems.”

This was, probably, but the raving of a disordered intellect, but Dee was too deeply imbued with the superstitions of the age to suppose for a moment that it was not a case of undisguised witchcraft, or that this wicked hag was not invested with sufficient power to execute whatever either anger or caprice might suggest.

“What is thy will with the wretched victim thou hast ensnared?” he inquired.

“I have told thee.”

“Thou wilt not convey him away bodily to his tormentors?”

“Unless they have a victim the inheritance may not be mine.” She said this with such a fiendish malice that made even the exorcist tremble. His presence of mind, however, did not forsake him.

"The ring — I remember — there was a condition in the bond. In all such compacts there is ever a loophole for escape."

"None that thou canst creep through," she said, with a look of scorn.

"It is not permitted that the children of men be tempted above measure."

"When that ring shall have strength to bind me, and not till then. All other bonds I rend asunder. Even adamant were as flaming tow."

"Here is a ring of stout iron," said Dee, pointing to an iron ring fixed by a stout staple in the wall. "I think it would try thy boasted strength."

"I could break it as the feeble reed."

The Doctor shook his head incredulously.

"Try me. Thou shalt find it no empty boast."

She seemed proud that her words should be put to the test; and even proposed that her arms should be pinioned, and her body fastened with stout cords to the iron ring which had been prepared for this purpose.

"Thou shalt soon find which is the strongest," said she, exultingly. "I have broken bonds ere now to which these are but as a thread."

She looked confident of success, and surveyed the whole proceeding with a look of unutterable scorn.

"Now do thy worst, thou wicked one," said Dee, when he had finished.

But lo! a shriek that might have wakened the dead. She was unable to extricate herself, being held in spite of the most desperate efforts to escape. With a loud yell she cried out,—

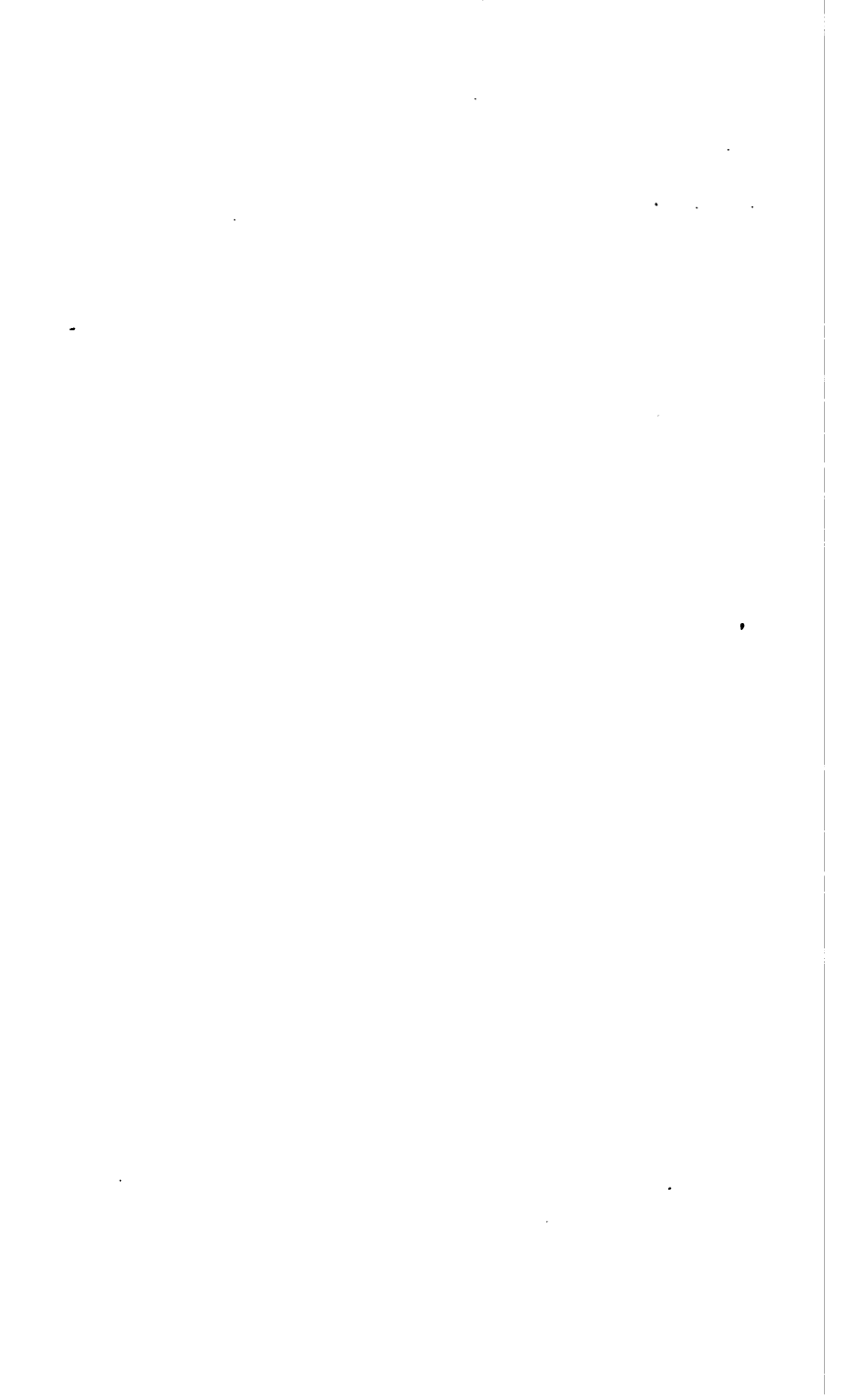
"Thou hast played me false, demon!"

"'Tis not thy demon," said Dee; "it is I that have circumvented thee. In that iron ring is concealed the charmed

one, wrought out by a cunning smith to this intent, — to wit, the deliverance of a persecuted house.”

The Red Woman now appeared shorn of her strength. Her charms and her delusions were dispelled. She sank into the condition of a hopeless, wretched maniac, and was for some time closely confined to this chamber.

Buckley, recovering soon after, was united to Grace Ashton, who it is confidently asserted, and perhaps believed, was restored to immediate health when the charm was broken.



THE DEATH - PAINTER ;

OR,

THE SKELETON'S BRIDE.

"THIS will hardly keep body and soul together," said Conrad Bergmann, as he eyed with a dissatisfied countenance some score of dingy kreutzers thrust into his palm by a "patron of early genius,"—one of those individuals who take great merit to themselves by just keeping their victims in that enviable position between life and death ;— between absolute starvation and hopeless, abject poverty, which effectually represses all efforts to excel, controls and quenches all, but longings after immortality,—who just fan the flame, to let it smoke and quiver in the socket, but sedulously prevent it rising to any degree of steadiness and brilliance.

Conrad that morning had taken home a picture, his sole occupation for two months, and this patron, a dealer in the "fine arts," dwelling in the good, quiet city of Mannheim, had given him a sum equivalent to thirty-six shillings sterling for his labour. Peradventure, it was not in the highest style of art ; but what Schwartzen Bären or Weisse Rösse — Black Bears, White Horses, Spread Eagles, and the like, the meanest, worst painted signs in the city, would not have commanded a higher price ?

In fact, Conrad had just genius enough to make himself miserable ; to wit, by aspiring after those honours it was impossible to attain, keeping him thereby in a constant fret

and disappointment, instead of being content with his station, or striving for objects within his reach. Could he have drudged on as some dauber of sign-posts, or taken to useful employment, he might, doubtless, have earned a comfortable sustenance. He had, however, like many another child of genius, a soul above such vulgarities; yearning after the ideal and the vain; having too much genius for himself and too little for the world: suspended in a sort of Mahomet's coffin, between earth and heaven, contemned, rejected, by "gods, men, and columns."

Conrad Bergmann was about two and twenty, of good figure and well-proportioned features. Complexion fair, bright bluish-grey eyes, whiskers well matched with a pale, poetical, it might be sickly, hue of countenance, and an expression more inclining to melancholy than persons of such mean condition have a right to assume. His father had brought him up to a trade, an honest, thriving business, to wit, that of *Knopfmacher* (button-maker). But Conrad, the youngest, and his mother's favourite, happened to be indulged with more idle time than the rest, which, for the most part, was laudably expended in scrawling sundry hideous representations—all manner of things, on walls and wainscoats. Persevering in this occupation, he was forthwith pronounced a genius. About the age of fifteen, Conrad saw a huge "St. Christopher," by a native artist, and straightway his destiny was fixed. He struggled on for some years with little success, save being pronounced by the gossips "marvellously clever." His performances wanted that careful and elaborate course of study indispensable even to the most exalted genius. They were not only glaring, tawdry, and ill-drawn, but worse conceived; flashy, crude accumulations of colour, only rendering their defects more apparent. He was, in a great measure, self-taught. His impetuous, ardent imagination could not endure the labour requisite to form an artist. He would fain have

read ere he had learned to spell; and the result might easily have been foretold.

His father died; and the family were but scantily provided for. Conrad was now forced to make out a livelihood by what was previously an amusement, not having "a trade in his fingers;" and he toiled on, selling his productions for the veriest trifle. He had now no leisure for improvement in the first elements of his art.

"Better starve or beg, better be errand-boy or lackey, than waste my talents on such an ungrateful world. I'll turn conjurer — fire-eater — mountebank; — set the fools agape at fairs and pastimes. Anything rather than killing — starving by inches. Why, the criminals at hard labour in the fortress have less work and better fare. I wish! — I wish ——"

"What dost wish, honest youth?" said a tall, heavy-eyed, beetle-browed, swarthy personage, who poked his face round from behind, close to that of the unfortunate artist, with great freedom and familiarity.

"I wish thou hadst better manners, or wast i' the stocks, where every prying, impertinent should be," replied Conrad, being in no very placable humour with his morning's work. The stranger laughed, not at all abashed by this ill-mannered, testy rebuke, replying good-humouredly,

"Ah, ah! master canvass-spoiler. Wherefore so hasty this morning? My legs befit not the gyves any more than thine own. But many a man thrusts his favours where they be more rare than welcome. I would do thee a service."

"'Tis the hangman's, then; for that seems the only favour that befits my condition."

"Thou art cynical, bitter at thy disappointment. Let us discourse together hard by. A flask of good Rhenish will soften and assuage thy humours. A drop of *Kirchenwasser*, too, might not be taken amiss this chill morning."

Nothing loth, Conrad followed the stranger, and they were soon imbibing some excellent *vin du pays* in a neighbouring tavern.

"Conrad Bergmann," began the stranger. "Ay, thou art surprised; but I know more than thy name. Wilt that I do thee a good office?"

"Not the least objection, friend, if the price be within reach. Nothing pay, nothing have, I reckon."

"The price? Nothing! At least nothing thou need care for. Thou art thirsting for fame, riches, for the honours of this world, for—for—the hand—the heart of thy beloved."

Amongst the rest of Conrad's calamities, he had the misfortune to be in love.

"Thou art mighty fluent with thy guesses," replied he, not at all relishing these unpleasant truths; "and what if I am doomed to pine after the good I can never attain? I will bear my miseries, if not without repining, at least without thy pity:" and he arose to depart.

"All that thou pinest after is thine. All!" said the stranger.

"Mine! by what process?—whose the gift?—Ha, ha!" and he drained the brimming glass, waiting a solution of his interrogatory.

"I will be thy instructor. Behold the renowned Doctor Gabriel Ras Mousa, who hath studied all arts and sciences in the world, who hath unveiled Nature in her most secret operations, and can make her submissive as a menial to his will. In a period incredibly short, I engage to make thee the most renowned painter in Christendom."

"And the time requisite to perform this?"

"One month! Ay, by the wand of Hermes, in one month, under my teaching, shalt thou have thy desire. I watched thy bargain with the dealer yonder, and have had pity on thy youth and misfortunes."

"Humph—compassion! And the price?" again inquired Conrad, with an anxious yet somewhat dubious expression of tone.

"The price? Once every month shalt thou paint me a picture."

"Is that all?"

"All."

Now Conrad began to indulge some pleasant fancies. Dreams of hope and ambition hovered about him; but he soon grew gloomy and desponding as heretofore. He waxed incredulous.

"One month? Nothing less, than a miracle! The time is too short. Impossible!"

"That is my business. I have both the will and the power. Is it a bargain?"

Conrad again drained the cup, and things looked brighter. He felt invigorated. His courage came afresh, and he answered firmly,

"A bargain."

"Give me thy hand."

"Oh, mein Herr—not so hard. Thy gripe is like a smithy vice."

"Beg pardon of thy tender extremities. To-morrow then, at this hour, we begin." Immediately after which intimation the stranger departed.

Conrad returned to his own dwelling. He felt restless, uneasy. Apprehensions of coming evil haunted him. Night was tenfold more appalling. Horrid visions kept him in continual alarm.

He arose feverish and unrefreshed. Yesterday's bargain did not appear so pleasant in his eyes; but fear gave way apace, and ere the appointed hour he was in his little work-room, where the mysterious instructor found him in anxious expectation. He drew the requisite materials from under

his cloak, a well-primed canvass already prepared. The pallet was covered, and Conrad sat down to obey his master's directions.

"What shall be our subject?" inquired the pupil.

"A head. Proceed."

"A female?"

"Yes. But follow my instructions implicitly."

Conrad chalked out the outline. It was feebly, incorrectly drawn; but the stranger took his crayon, and by a few spirited touches gave life, vigour, and expression to the whole. Conrad was in despair.

"O that it were in my power to have done this!" he cried, putting one hand on his brow, and looking at the picture as though he would have devoured it.

"Now for colour," said the stranger; and he carefully directed his pupil how to lay in the ground, to mingle and contrast the different tints, in a manner so far superior to his former process, that Conrad soon began to feel a glow of enthusiasm. His fervour increased, the latent spark of genius was kindled. In short, the unknown seemed to have imbued him with some hitherto unfelt attributes,—invested him either with new powers, or awakened his hitherto dormant faculties. As before, by a few touches, the crude, spiritless mass became living and breathing under the master's hand. Not many hours elapsed ere a pretty head, respectably executed, appeared on the canvass. Conrad was in high spirits.

He felt a new sense, a new faculty, as it were, created within him. He worked industriously. Every hour seemed to condense the labour and experience of years. He made prodigious advances. His master came daily at the same time, and at length his term of instruction drew to a close. The last morning of the month arrived; and Conrad, unknown to his neighbours, had attained to the highest rank in his profession. His paintings, all executed under the

immediate superintendence of the stranger, were splendid specimens of art.

* * * * *

In the year —, all Paris was moved with the extraordinary performances of a young artist, whose portraits were the most wonderful, and his miniatures the most exquisite, that eyes ever beheld. They looked absolutely as though endowed with life, real flesh and blood to all appearance; and happy were those who could get a painting from his hand. The price was enormous, and the marvellous facility with which they were dispatched was not the least extraordinary part of the business. There was a mystery too, about him, provokingly delightful, especially to the female portion of the community. In place of living in a gay and fashionable part of the city, his lodging was in a miserable garret, overlooking one of the gloomiest streets of the metropolis. His manners, too, were forbidding and reserved. Instead of exhibiting the natural buoyancy of his years, he looked care-worn and dejected; nor was he ever known to smile.

After a period, whispers got abroad that several of his female subjects came to strange and untimely deaths. They were seized with some dangerous malady, accompanied by frightful delusions. In general, they fancied themselves possessed. Wailings, shrieks, and horrible blasphemies proceeded from the lips of the sufferers. These reports were doubtless exaggerated, the marvellous being a prodigiously accumulative and inventive faculty; yet enough remained, apparently authentic, to justify the most unfavourable suspicions.

About this time a young Italian lady, of a noble house, arrived on a visit to her brother in the suite of the Florentine embassy. This princely dame, possessed of great wealth and beauty, was not long unprovided with lovers; one especially, a handsome official in the royal household,

De Vessey by name, and as gallant a cavalier as ever lady looked upon. But her term of absence being nigh expired, the lovers were in great perplexity; and nothing seemed so likely to contribute to their comfort, during such unavoidable separation, as a miniature portrait of each from the hands of this inimitable painter. Leonora sat first, and the lover was in raptures. Hour by hour he watched the progress of his work, in a little gloomy chamber, where the artist, like some automaton fixture, was always found in the same place, occupied too, as it might seem, without intermission.

"The gaze of that strange painter distresses me inexpressibly," said Leonora to her companion, as they went for the last time to his apartment. "I have borne it hitherto without a murmur, but words cannot describe the reluctance with which I endure his glance; yet while I feel as though my very soul abhorred it, it penetrates, nay, drinks up and withers my spirit. Though I shrink from it, some influence or fascination, call it as thou wilt, prevents escape; I cannot turn away my eyes from his terrible gaze."

"Thou art fanciful, my love," said De Vessey; "the near prospect of our parting makes thee apt to indulge these gloomy impressions. Be of good cheer; nothing shall harm thee in my presence. 'Tis the last sitting; put on a well-favoured aspect, I beseech thee. Remember, this portraiture will be my only solace during the long, long hours of thine absence."

As they entered the artist's chamber, the picture lay before him, which he seemed to contemplate with such absorbing intensity, that he was hardly aware of their entrance. He did not weep, but grief and pity were strangely mingled in his glance. It was but for a moment; he quickly resumed his usual attitude and expression. Whether the previous conversation had made her lover liable to take the tone and character of her own thoughts, we know not; but, for the first time, he fancied Leonora's apprehensions were

not entirely without excuse. He looked on the artist, and it excited almost a thrill of apprehension. But speedily chiding himself for these untoward fancies, he felt that little was apparent, either in look or manner, but what the painter's peculiar and unexampled genius might sufficiently explain.

Suddenly his attention was riveted on the lady. He saw her lips quiver and turn pale, as though she would have swooned. In a moment he was at her side. The support seemed to reanimate the fainting maiden, her head drooping on his shoulder. Almost gasping for utterance, she whispered, "Take me hence, I want breath,— air, air!" De Vessey lifted her in his arms, and bore her forth into the open door-way. Trembling, shuddering, and looking round, the first words she uttered were,—

"We are watched,—by some unseen being in yonder chamber, I am persuaded. Didst not mark an antique, dismal-looking ebony cabinet, immediately behind the painter?"

"I did, and admired its exquisite workmanship, as though wrought by some cunning hand."

"As I fixed my eyes on those little traceries, it might be fancy, but methought I saw the bright flash of a human eye gazing on me."

"Oh, my Leonora, indulge not these gloomy impressions. Throw off thy wayward fancies. 'Tis but the reflex image the mind mistakes for outward realities. When disordered, she discerns not the substance from the shadow. Thou art well-nigh recovered. Come, come, let us in. To-day is the last of our task; prithee take courage and return."

"On one condition only; if thou take the chair first, and note well an open scroll to the right, where those fawns and satyrs are carved."

"Agreed. And now shake off thy fears, my love."

De Vessey led her again to the apartment, and, as though

without consideration, sat down, his face directly towards the cabinet. He fixed his eyes thereon a few seconds only, when Leonora saw him start up suddenly with a troubled aspect, and grasp the hilt of his sword. Then turning to the painter, he said sternly,—

“So!— We have intruders here, I trow.”

“Intruders? None!” was the artist’s reply, without betraying either surprise or alarm.

“That we’ll see presently,” said the cavalier, hastening to the cabinet; which, with hearty good will, he essayed to open.

“Why this outrage?” inquired the painter, colouring with a hectic flush.

“Because ’tis my good pleasure,” was the haughty reply. The door resisted his utmost efforts. “Doubtless held by some one within. Open, or by this good sword I’ll make a passage through both door and carcase.”

The hinges slowly gave way, the folding doors swung open, and displayed a grinning skeleton!

“Ah! what lodger is this?”

“Mine art requires it,” said the painter with a ghastly smile; but in that smile was an expression so fearful, yet mysterious, that even De Vessey quailed before it. Another miniature portrait, a precise copy of the one in hand, hung from the neck of the skeleton.

Leonora, with a loud shriek, covered her face; but the lover, though far from satisfied himself, strove to assure his mistress, and besought her not to indulge any apprehension.

“You are disturbed, lady,” said the artist. “’Tis but a harmless piece of earth, a mouldering fabric of dust, a thing, a form we must all one day assume. But to-morrow, to-morrow, if you will, we resume our work.”

Leonora, relieved by the intimation, gladly consented, fain, for a while, to escape from this terrible chamber.

“Nought living was there, of a truth,” said the cavalier,

in evident perplexity, as they regained their coach. "But I saw plain enough, or imagination played me the prank, a semblance of a bright and flashing eye on the spot pointed out. Something incomprehensible hangs about the whole!"

Leonora agreed in this conclusion, expressing a fear lest harm should happen to themselves thereby. They were not ignorant of the whispers afloat, but hitherto treated them either with ridicule or indifference. Suspicion, however, once awake, mystery once apprehended, every circumstance, even the most trivial, is seized upon, the mind bending all to one grand object which haunts and excites the imagination.

Having left his companion at her brother's dwelling, De Vessey came to his own, moody and dispirited. A vague sense of some grievous but impending misfortune hung heavily upon him. Night brought no mitigation of his fears. Spectres, skeletons, and demon-painters haunted his slumbers. He awoke in greater torment than ever. The duplicate portrait was brought to his remembrance with a vividness, an intensity so appalling, that he almost expected to behold the skeleton wearer at his bedside.

Involved in a labyrinth of inextricable surmises, and not knowing what course to pursue, he arose early, and walked forth without aim or design towards the church of Notre Dame.

The red sun was just bursting through a thick atmosphere of mist, illuminating its two dark western towers, which looked even more gloomy under a bright and glowing sky, like melancholy in immediate contrast with hilarity and joy.

He passed the Morgue, or dead-house, where bodies found in the Seine are exposed, in order that they may be owned or recognised. Impelled by curiosity, he entered. One space alone was occupied. He could not surely be deceived when he saw the body of the unfortunate painter! Those features

were too well remembered to be mistaken. Here was new ground for conjecture, fresh wonder and perplexity. He left this melancholy exhibition and entered the cathedral. Mass was celebrating at one of the altars. De Vessey joined in adoration, strolling away afterwards towards the vaults: one of them was open. From some vague, unaccountable impulse, he thus accosted the sexton:

"Whose grave is this, friend?"

"A maid's — mayhap."

"Her name?"

"The only remaining descendant of the Barons Montargis."

"I have some knowledge of that noble gentlewoman; she was just about to be married. What might be the nature of her malady?"

"Why, verily there be as many guesses as opinions. The doctors were all at fault, and, 'tis said, even now in great dispute. The king's physician tried hard to save her. Old Frère Jeronymo, the confessor, will have it she was possessed; but all his fumigations, exorcisms, paters, and holy water could not cast out the foul fiend. She died raving mad!"

"A miserable portion for one so young and high-born. Was there no visible cause?"

"Cause! — Ay, marry; if common gossip be not an arrant jade. Her portrait had been taken by that same limner who, they say, has been taught in the devil's school, and can dispatch a likeness with the twirl of his brush."

"And what of that?" cried De Vessey, in an agony of impatience:

"Why, the same fate has happened to several of our city dames. That is all."

"What has happened?"

"They have gone mad, and either felt, or fancied, some demon had gotten them in keeping. For my part, I pretend

not to a knowledge of the matter. But you seem strangely moved, methinks."

The cavalier was nigh choking with emotion. Sick at heart, and with a fearful presentiment of impending evil, he turned suddenly away.

His next visit, as may be supposed, was to his mistress. He found her in great agitation. The portrait had been sent home the preceding night, and, completely finished, lay before her,—an exquisite, nay marvellous, specimen of art. She was gazing on her own radiant counterpart as he entered. They both agreed that something more than ordinary ran through the whole proceedings, though unable to comprehend their meaning. De Vessey related his discovery in the Morgue, but not his subsequent interview with the sexton.

Ere night, Leonora was seized with a strange and frightful disease. Symptoms of insanity were soon developed. She uttered fearful cries; calling on the painter in language wild and incoherent, but of terrific import.

The lover was at his wits' end. He vowed to spare no efforts to save her, though scarcely knowing what course to pursue, or in what quarter to apply for help.

His first care was to seek the dwelling of a certain renowned doctor, a German, whose extraordinary cures and mode of treatment had won for him great wealth and reputation. Though by some accounted a quack and impostor, nevertheless De Vessey hoped, as a last resource, so cunning a physician might be able to point at once the source and cure of this occult malady.

Doctor Herman Sichel lived in one of those high, antique, dreary looking habitations, now pulled down, situate in the Rue d'Enfer. A common staircase conducted to several suites of apartments, tenanted by various occupants, and at the very summit dwelt this exalted personage.

A pull at the ponderous bell-handle gave notice of

De Vessey's approach, when, after due deliberation, it might seem, and a long trial to the impatient querent, a little wicket was cautiously slid back, behind a grating in the door. A face, partially exhibited, demanded his errand.

"Thy master, knave!"

"He is in the very entrails of a sublime study. Not for my beard, grey though it be, dare I break in upon him."

"Mine errand is urgent," said De Vessey; "and, look thee, say a noble cavalier hath great need of succour at his hands."

"Grammercy, sir cavalier, and hath not everybody an errand of like moment? — thy business, peradventure, less urgent than fifty others whose suit I have denied this blessed day. I tell thee, my master may not be disturbed!"

De Vessey held up a coin, temptingly, before the grating. It would not go through, and the crusty Cerberus gently undid a marvellous array of chains, bars, and other ingenious devices, opening a slit wide enough for its insertion.

"Wider! thou trusty keeper," said the artful suitor outside. "I cannot fly though a key-hole!"

A hand was carefully protruded. The cavalier, espying his opportunity, thrust first his sword, afterwards himself, through the aperture, in spite of curses and entreaties from the greedy porter. He was immediately within a dark entrance or vestibule; the astonished and angry menial venting his wrath, in no measured phrases, on the intruder. De Vessey, in a peremptory tone, demanded to be led forthwith into the doctor's presence. The old man delayed for awhile, almost speechless from several causes. His breath was nigh spent. Wrath on the one hand, fear of his master's displeasure on the other, kept him, like antagonist forces, perpetually midway between both.

"Lead the way, knave, or, by the beard of St. Louis, I'll seek him through the house! Quick! thou hast legs; if not, speak! mine errand is urgent, and will not wait."

A stout and determined cavalier, with a strong gripe, and a sword none of the shortest, was not to be trifled with ; and, after many expostulations, warnings, threats, had failed of their effect, he at length doggedly consented.

"Thou wilt give me the coin, then, sir cavalier ?"

"Ay, when thou hast earned it. Away !"

Passing through a narrow passage, lighted from above, his conductor paused before a curiously carved oaken door, at which three taps announced a message.

"Now enter, and pray for us both a safe deliverance. But, prithee, tell him it was not my fault thou hast gotten admission."

The door slowly opened, as though without an effort, and De Vessey was immediately in the presence of the physician, evidently to the surprise of the learned doctor himself, who angrily demanded his business and the ground of his intrusion.

"Mine hour is not yet come, young man. Wherefore shouldest thou, either by stratagem or force, thrust thyself, unbidden, into our presence ?"

"To buy or beg thine aid, if it be possible. The case admits not of delay. I crave thy pardon, most reverend doctor, if that content thee ; and, rest assured, no largess, no reward shall be too great, if thou restore one, I fear me, beyond earthly aid."

"Thus am I ever solicited," replied the sage, with a portentous scowl. He was clad in a gown of dark stuff, with slippers to match ; his poll surmounted by a small black velvet skull-cap, from which his white, intensely white, hair escaped in great profusion. His visage was not swarthy, but of a leaden, pale complexion, where little could be discerned of the wondrous microcosm within. Books, and manuscripts of ancient form and character, emblazoned in quaint and mystic devices, lay open on a long oak table, on which rested one elbow of the wise man ; the

other was thrown over an arm of the high-backed chair whereon he sat. The room contained plenty of litter in the shape of phials, boxes, and other strange furniture. A cupola furnace was just heated, the doctor, apparently, concocting some subtle compound.

"I am expected to wrest these helpless mortals even from the ravening jaws of the grave! My skill never tried until beyond other aid!"

"But this disorder is of a sudden emergency. A lady of high birth and lineage, a few hours since, was seized with a raging frenzy."

"A female, then!"

"Ay, and of such sweet temper and excellent parts, there be none to match with her, body or mind, in Christendom."

"When did this malady attack her?"

"Almost immediately after a portrait, made by the celebrated painter, was finished. Of him thou hast, doubtless, heard."

"The painter!—Ay!—There be more than thou have rued his skill. Young man, thy pretty one is lost."

"Lost! Oh, say not so! I will give thee thine utmost desire—riches—wealth thou hast never possessed, if thou restore her!"

"She is beyond my skill. Hast visited him since?"

"I have seen him. She is the last victim, if such be her fate. This very morning, betimes, I saw his body in the Morgue."

"They have found him, then!" said the doctor, sharply. "Yet our bodies are but *exuviae*. When cast off, this thinking, sentient principle within has another tabernacle assigned to it, until the great consummation of all things. But these are fables, idle tales, to the unlearned. Nevertheless, I pity thy cruel fate, and, if aid can be afforded, will call another to thine help. Hence! Thou shalt hear from me anon."

“And without loss of time ; for every moment, methinks, our succour may come too late.”

“I will forthwith seek out one whom I have heretofore taken knowledge of. Every science has its votaries, — its adepts ; and this evil case hath its remedy only by those skilled in arts called, however falsely, supernatural. Even now, there be intelligences around us, which the corporeal eye seeth not, nor can see, unless purged from the dross, the fumes of mortality. Some, peradventure, by long and patient study, have arrived on the very borders, the confines that separate visible from invisible things ; and become, as it were, the medium of intercourse for mortals, who are, by this means, mightily aided in matters beyond ordinary research. Put thine ear to this shell. Mark its voice, like the sound of many waters. Are not these the invisible source, the essence of its being ? Has not every thing in like manner, even the most inanimate, a tongue, a language, peculiar to itself—a soul, a spirit, pervading its form, which moulds and fashions every substance according to its own nature ? Now, this voice thou canst not interpret, being unskilled ; knowing not the languages peculiar to every form and modification of matter. Else would this beautiful type of the ever-rolling sea discourse marvellously to thine ear. But thou hast not the key to uncloset its mystic tongue ; hence, like any other unknown speech, ’tis but a confused jumble of unmeaning sound. I have little more knowledge than thyself, but there be those who can interpret. Vain man—presumptuous, ignorant—scoffs at knowledge beyond his reach, and thinks his own dim, nay darkened reason, glimmering as in a dungeon, the narrow horizon that circumscribes his vision, the utmost boundary of all knowledge and existence, while, beyond, lies the infinite and unknown, utterly transcending his capacity and comprehension.”

De Vessey drank up every word of this harangue; and something akin to hope rose in his bosom, as he withdrew.

"Thou wilt have a message ere nightfall. An awful trial awaits thee ere the spell can be countervailed."

The cavalier withdrew, suffering many wistful remarks from the old door-keeper, who marvelled greatly at the interview so graciously conceded by his master; while at the same time holding out his palm for the promised largess.

De Vessey waited impatiently at his own dwelling for the expected message. Evening drew on, dark and stormy. The wind roared along the narrow streets in sharp and irregular gusts; while, pacing his chamber in an agony of suspense, he fancied every sound betokened the approaching communication. At length, when expectation was almost weary, a louder rumbling was heard; a coach drew up at the door; a hasty knock, and a heavy tramp; then footsteps ascending the staircase. The door opened, and two *gens-d'armes* entered.

"We have authority and instructions for the arrest of one Sigismund de Vessey, on a charge of murder, made this day by deposition before the Mayor and Prefecture of the Ville de Paris. The individual so named, we apprehend, is before us."

"The same; though assuredly there is some mistake. Of whose death am I accused?"

"Of one Conrad Bergmann, a painter, whose body, last night thrown into the Seine, was to-day exposed in the Morgue. The rest will be explained anon."

"But an engagement, one too of a most important nature, demands my presence."

"No discretion is allowed us in this matter. The carriage waits."

However reluctant, De Vessey was forced to obey. Though confident of a speedy release, this arrest at so important a juncture was provoking enough. Leonora's

recovery might probably depend on his exertions for the next few hours, which were now suddenly wrested from him.

Leaving word that he would shortly return, the cavalier stept into the vehicle, which immediately drove off.

In a little space the coach stopped, and De Vessey was invited to alight. He was led up a narrow staircase; a door flew open. He entered. Could it be; surely imagination betrayed his senses! He could scarcely believe himself once more in the apartment of the painter! Yet there was no mistaking what he saw. The ebony cabinet, the easel, table, chair, all left as he saw them yesterday. But the living occupants were strangely diverse. Two or three functionaries of the civil power, and, in one corner, a black cloth, spread on the floor, concealed some unknown object. The whole was lighted by a feeble lamp from the ceiling. A dusky haze from the damp foggy atmosphere rendered objects ill-defined, indistinct, almost terrific to an excited imagination. In addition to the usual articles of furniture, was a desk, with writing materials, at which one of the officers of justice appeared dictating something to his secretary.

On De Vessey's entrance, the scribe made some minute preparatory to his examination, which commenced as follows:

"Sigismund de Vessey?"

"The same."

"Being accused upon oath before us of murder, thou art brought hither to confront thine accusers, and to answer this heinous charge. First, let the body be produced."

The cloth was removed, and De Vessey beheld the corpse lying on a mattress.

"Knowest thou this body?"

"I do," said the cavalier firmly.

"When was he seen by thee alive, the last time?"

"Yesterday, about noon."

"Where?"

"In this chamber."

"Not since?"

"Yes, but not living."

"Dead, sayest thou?"

"This morning in the Morgue."

"Not previously?"

"I have not. But pray to what purport this examination?"

"This will appear presently. When taken out of the river, marks were found upon the throat, as though from strangulation. Knowest thou aught of these?"

"I do not," said the accused indignantly.

This answer being written down, the examination was resumed.

"We have testimony that the unfortunate victim and thyself were seen together about midnight; and, further, a short but violent struggle was heard, and a heavy plunge; afterwards an individual, with whom thou art identified, was seen departing in great haste, and entering the house well known as thy residence in the Rue de ——"

"A most foul and wicked fabrication, for purposes of which as yet I am ignorant. Of such charges I hardly need affirm that I am innocent."

"Let the accuser stand forth."

"To the surprise and horror of De Vessey, there appeared from a recess the German doctor, Hermann Sichel, who, without flinching, recapitulated the foregoing accusation. Moreover, he swore in the most positive terms to his identity, and that not a doubt rested on his mind but De Vessey was the murderer.

"In this very apartment," said the witness, "he, De Vessey, drew his sword upon the painter yesterday, doubtless either from grudge or jealousy; being enamoured of a fair Italian dame, Leonora da Rimini."

"Most abominable of liars!" said the accused, eyeing him with a furious look. "How darest thou, to my face, bring this foul accusation. Thou shalt answer for it with thy blood!"

"Hear him! What need of further testimony? His own betrayed him," said the doctor, with unblushing effrontery.

"We have other witness thou wilt not dare to gainsay," said the presiding officer. "This learned person is amply corroborated by evidence that must effectually silence all denial. He hath referred us to her who was present, Leonora da Rimini."

"Leonora! what, my own — my betrothed? She my accuser?"

"Spare thy speech and listen. We could not bring the maiden hither, insomuch the nature of her malady admits not of removal: but her evidence and accusation are duly attested, taken at her own request, not many hours ago. The substance of her deposition is as follows: a confession to her of thine intention to murder Conrad Bergmann, the artist aforesaid, being jealous of his attentions; and furthermore, in the agony of guilt, thou didst confess in her presence, having first strangled, and afterwards thrown him into the river, hoping thereby to conceal thy crime; then forcing her to swear she would keep the matter secret, and threatening her life in case it were divulged. This outrage, and this alone, hath nigh driven her frantic; her life being in jeopardy from thy violence. What sayest thou, Sigismund de Vessey?"

"A lie, most foul and audacious! trumped up by that impostor! Leonora? Impossible. I would not believe though it were from her own lips. Some demon hath possessed her. This disorder is more than common madness."

He looked around. The whole was like the phantasma of some terrible dream. Bewildered, and hardly knowing what course to pursue, in vain he attempted to shake the

testimony of the hoary villain before him; and having at present none other means of rebutting the accusation, he was ordered into close custody until the morrow.

Utterly unprepared with evidence, he knew not where to apply. That he was the victim of some foul plot, so far appeared certain; but for what purpose, and at whose instigation, was inexplicable.

Ere an hour had elapsed, De Vessey found himself in one of the cells of a public dungeon, with ample leisure to form plans for proving his innocence. He determined early on the morrow to acquaint his friends, and employ a celebrated advocate to expose this villanous doctor, who no doubt had designs either on his purse or person.

In a while, the prisoner fell asleep from fatigue and exhaustion. He was awakened by a sudden glare across his eyelids. At first, imagining he was under the influence of some extravagant dream, he made little effort to arouse himself. A figure stood beside the couch; a lamp lifted above his head. A friar's cowl concealed his features; his person too was enveloped in a coarse garment, with a huge rosary at his girdle.

"Mortal, awake and listen," said the unknown visitor, "Art weary of life, or does this present world content thee?"

"Who art thou?" said De Vessey, scarcely raising himself from the pallet.

"I am thy friend, thy deliverer an' thou wilt."

"Thanks!" said the knight, springing from his recumbent posture.

"Stay!" replied the intruder, "there be conditions ere thou pass hence. Miserable offspring of Adam, ye still cling to your prison and your clay. Wherefore shrink from the separation, afraid to shake off your bonds, your loathsome carcase, and spring forth at once to life? Art thou prepared to fulfil one — but one condition for thy release?"

"Name it! Manifest my innocence; and if it be gold,

thou shalt have thy desire. No hired advocate ere yet held such a fee!"

"Keep thy gold for baser uses; it buyeth not my benefits. But remember, thy life is not worth a week's purchase, neither is thy mistress' forsooth, shouldest thou be witless enough to refuse. An ignominious death, a base exit for thyself,—for her, madness and a speedy grave. One fate awaits ye both. Life and health, if thou consent are yours."

"Thou speakest riddles. It were vain trying to comprehend their import. Name thy conditions. Aught, that honour may purchase, will I give."

The stranger threw back his cowl, displaying the features of the renowned Doctor Hermann Sichel: a gleam of lurid intelligence lighted his grim grey eyes, that might betoken either insanity or excitement.

Without reflecting for one moment on the hazard and imprudence of his conduct, De Vessey immediately rushed forward, grappled with his adversary, and threw him.

"Now will I have deadly vengeance, fiend! Take that!" said he, drawing forth a concealed poignard, and thrusting with all his might. Scorn puckered the features of the pretended monk. The weapon's point was driven back, refusing to enter, as though his enemy held a charmed existence.

"Put back thy weapon; thou wilt have need of it elsewhere, silly one."

De Vessey was confounded at this unlooked-for result. His foe seemed invulnerable, and he slunk back.

"I forgive thee, poor fool! Put it back, I say. There—there—now to work—time hastens, and there is little space for parley."

"What is thy will?"

"Thy welfare, thy life; listen. Yonder unhappy wretch I have laden with benefits, rescued from poverty, disgrace,

lifted him to the pinnacle of his ambition, the highest rank in art. Base ingrate, he threatened to betray, to denounce, and I crushed the reptile. He is now what thou shalt be shortly, unless my power be put forth for thy rescue. Not all the united efforts of man can deliver thee. Beyond earthly aid, thou diest the death of a dog!"

"Why dost thou accuse me of a crime, knowing that I am innocent?"

"To drive thee, helpless, into my power. Think not to escape save on one condition."

"Name it," said De Vessey.

"Self-preservation is the great, the paramount law of our nature; the most powerful impulse implanted in our being. All, all obey this impulse; and who can control or forbid its operation? Will not the most timid, the most scrupulous, if no alternative be afforded, slay the adversary who seeks his life; and does not the law both of earth and heaven hold him guiltless? Thou art now denounced. Innocent, thy life must be sacrificed. Thou diest, or another; there is no choice."

"But shall I murder the innocent."

"And suppose it be. What thinkest thou? Two persons, equally guiltless, one of them must die. Self-preservation will prompt instinctively to action. Does not the drowningman cling to his companion; nay, rescue himself at the expense of another's life?"

De Vessey felt bewildered, if not convinced. Need we wonder if he yielded. Life or death. Honour, disgrace. His mistress restored; his innocence proved. Life, with him, had scarcely been tasted. A glorious career awaited him; his lady-love smiling through the bright vista of the future; and — the tempter prevailed!

But who must be the victim? The appalling truth was not then disclosed. De Vessey promised to obey.

"But remember, no power, not even flight, can screen

thee from my vengeance shouldst break thy vow. Take warning by the painter; the poor fool but hesitated, and his doom was swift as it was sure. Take this cowl and friar's garment; I was admitted by the jailor for thy shrift. The lamp will guide thee. Be bold, and fear not. I will remain; to-morrow they will find out their mistake, but I have other means of escape."

"And Leonora. How shall she be recovered?"

"That is a work of peril, and will need thine utmost vigilance. Rememberest thou the skeleton?"

"In the ebony cabinet?" inquired the cavalier, with a cold shudder.

"He hath her portrait, and will not lightly be persuaded to give his prey. *Every month I am bound to furnish him a bride!* My own life pays the forfeit of omission. Leonora is the next victim, unless thou prevail, betrothed to that grisly type of death!"

"Oh, horrible! Mine the bride of a loathsome skeleton! Of an atomy! A fiend! Monster, I will denounce thee. I care not for my own life. Of what worth if torn from hers. Wretch, give back my bride or ——"

"Spare these transports. I am now thine only friend. Thou art now cut off from thy kin, shunned by mankind. To whom then wilt thou turn for help? Mine thou art, for ever!"

De Vessey gasped for utterance.

"Nevertheless," continued his tormentor, "I will direct and help thee in this matter also. But 'tis a fearful venture. Hast thou courage?"

"If to rescue her, aught that human arm can achieve shall be done."

"He holds the portrait, I tell thee, with a steady gripe. Those skeleton fingers will be hard to unloose."

"I will break them, or perish. This good ——"

"Touch them not for thy life. Death, sure but lingering,

awaits whomsoever they fasten upon. Take this key. It will admit thee to the apartment. To-night the deed must be accomplished, or to-morrow the maiden is beyond succour."

"And how is this charmed picture to be wrested from him?"

"An ebony wand lies at his feet; he will obey its touch. But whatsoever thou seest, be nothing daunted, nor let any silly terror scare thee from thy purpose. Now to thy task. But keep these marvels to thyself. If thou whisper, ay to the winds, our compact, thou art not safe."

Soon De Vessey, enveloped in his disguise, found egress without difficulty. Once outside the prison, he hurried on scarcely giving himself time for reflection.

The night was dark and stormy. Torches, distributed about the streets, rocked and swung to and fro in their sockets, the flames, with a strange and flickering glare, giving an unnatural distorted appearance to objects within reach; and, to some solitary individual, at this late hour hurrying alone, the grim aspect of a demon or a spectre to the disturbed imagination of the lover. His courage, at times on the point of deserting him, revived, when he remembered that another's life, dearer than his own, depended on his exertions. The streets, almost deserted, swam with continually accumulating torrents: but he felt not that terrible tempest; the turmoil, the conflict within, was louder than the roar and tumult of outward elements.

Almost ere he was aware, he found himself opposite the entrance of the painter's habitation; a shudder, like a death-chill, shot through his frame. He applied his key. A distant gleam, a dim lurid light, seemed to quiver before him. He heard the quick jar, the withdrawing bolt, that gave him admittance, as though it were a spectral voice warning him to desist.

The unknown dangers he anticipated, rendered more

terrific by their vague indefinite character, were enough to appal a stouter bosom. De Vessey would have faced and defied earthly perils, but these were almost beyond his fortitude to endure. Love, however, gave excitement, if not courage, and he resolved either to succeed or perish in the attempt. The stairs were partially illumined by an uncertain glimmer from a narrow window into the street. He felt his way, and every step sent the life-blood curdling to his heart. He reached the topmost stair ; laid one hand on the latch. He listened ; all was still, save the hollow gusts that rumbled round the dwelling.

With a feeling somewhat akin to desperation, he entered. A lamp yet burning emitted a feeble glare, but was well-nigh spent, giving a more dismal aspect to this lonely chamber. It was apparently unoccupied. The chair, the black funeral pall left by the officers of justice over the pallet, the mysterious cabinet, the desk where the painter usually sat, all remained undisturbed. De Vessey's attention was more particularly directed towards the cabinet ; there alone, according to his instructions, were the means of deliverance. A cold, clammy perspiration, a freezing shiver, came upon him as he approached. He laid one hand on the latch ; it resisted as before. He tried force, a loud groan was heard in the chamber. Every fibre of his frame seemed to grow rigid ; every limb stiffened with horror, and he drew back.

This was a sorry beginning to the adventure, and he inwardly repented of his rashness. Looking round in extreme agony, his eyes rested on the black pall. Could it be ! or was it from the expiring glimmer of the lamp ? The drapery appeared to move. Another, and a deeper groan ! De Vessey for a space was unable to move ; but his courage came apace, inasmuch as it was some relief, and a diversion from the awful mysteries of that grim cabinet. He approached the pallet hastily, throwing off the heavy coverlet.

The recumbent body was yet beneath, but convulsed, as though struggling to free itself from an oppressive burden. De Vessey watched, while his blood froze with terror. Gradually these convulsive movements extended to the features. The lips quivered, as though essaying to speak; the eye-balls rolling rapidly under their lids. A slight flush dawned upon the cheek; the hands were tightly closed, and another groan preceded one desperate attempt to throw off the load which prevented returning animation. At length the eyes opened with a ghastly stare; but evidently conveying no outward impression to the inward sense. With a loud shriek the body started up: then, uttering a wild and piercing cry, rolled on the floor, foaming, and struggling for life as though with some powerful adversary.

"Save me! Save me!" was uttered in a tone so harrowing and dreadful, more than mortal agony, that De Vessey would have fled, but his limbs refused their office.

"He strangles me! Fiend—have—have mercy! Wilt thou not? Oh mercy, mercy Heaven!" His senses, though evidently bewildered, resumed their functions. With a glare of intense anguish he appeared as though supplicating help and deliverance.

"Who art thou?" was the first inquiry and symptom of returning reason. "I know thee, De Vessey. But why art thou here? Another victim. Yes, to torture me. Where am I? In my own chamber! Oh—that horrid cabinet! Yet—yet these cruel torments. Will they never end?"

De Vessey immediately perceived there was no delusion; the mortal form of the artist was really before him. Terrible though it were, yet it was a relief to have companionship with his kind, a being of flesh and blood beside him. He might now, peradventure, accomplish his task. Providence, may be, had opened a way for his deliverance, and hope

once more dawned on his spirit. He helped the miserable artist to regain his couch, and sought to soothe him, beseeching the helpless victim not to give way to frenzy, doubtless resulting from his strange and emaciated condition. A miracle or a spell had been wrought for his resuscitation; but the events of the last few hours were alike enigmas, beyond the common operations of nature to explain.

"Yesterday I attempted suicide," said the artist, "taking poison to escape a life insupportable to me. Fain would I have broken the chain which binds me to this miserable existence. But yon tyrant hath given me a charmed life. I cannot even die!"

"Thy body was dragged from the Seine."

"How?" inquired the artist with an incredulous look.

"And exposed this morning in the Morgue," continued De Vessey.

"When will my sufferings cease? How have I prayed for deliverance from this infernal thralldom."

"Yon deceiver hath doubtless thrown thee into the river, and supposing thou wert dead, he designs me to supply thy place; to carry on the dark mystery of iniquity, a glimpse of which hath already been revealed."

"Would that I had been left to perish, — that my doom were ended. Avarice, ambition! how enslaved are your victims. How have I longed for my miserable cottage, my poverty, my obscurity, — cold and pinching want, but a quiet conscience to season my scanty meal. I bartered all for gold, for fame and — misery! A cruel bondage! compared to which I could envy the meanest thing that crawls on this abject earth. In my trance, I dreamed of green fields and babbling streams; of my brethren, my playmates, my days of innocence and sport, when all was freshness and anticipation, — life one bright vista beyond, opening to sunny regions of rapture and delight. And now,

what am I? — a wretch, degraded, undone, — a spectacle of misery, beyond what human thought can conceive. Doomed to years, ages it may be, of woe, — to scenes of horror such as tongue ne'er told, and even imagination might scarce endure, and my miseries but a foretaste of that hereafter!"

Here the guilty victim writhed in a paroxysm of agony; his veins swollen almost to bursting. Whether real or imaginary, whether a victim to insanity, or of some supernatural agent, its influence was not the less terrible in its effects. Starting suddenly from his grovelling posture, he cried, fixing his eyes on De Vessey with a searching glance, —

"What brings thee hither?"

"Leonora is in jeopardy by your spells. I seek her deliverance."

"She is beyond rescue. Leonora da Rimini is THE SKELETON'S BRIDE!"

Here the painter threw such a repulsive glance towards the cabinet, that the cavalier shrank back as though expecting some grisly spectre from its portals; yet, himself the subject of an extraordinary fascination, he could not withdraw his gaze.

"Fly, fly, or thou art lost! My tormentor will be here anon, — I would have saved her, and he fixed his burning gripe here, I feel it still; not a night passes that he comes not hither. Away! shouldest thou meet him, thy doom is fixed, and for ever. I would not that another fell into his toils. Coudest thou know, ay, but as a whisper, the secrets of this prison-house, thy spirit would melt, thy flesh would shrink as though the hot wind of the desert had passed over. What I have endured, and what I must endure, are alike unutterable."

"Thy keeper comes not to-night. He hath sent me to this chamber of death instead. He knows not thou art alive."

"Thee! — To — But I must not reveal; my tongue cleaves to my mouth. Nay, nay, it cannot be; none but a fiend could do his behest. Away! for thy life, away!"

De Vessey related the events of the last few hours. The artist ruminated awhile; then abruptly exclaimed —

"He hath some diabolical design thereupon which I am not yet able to fathom. That it is for thine undoing Sir Knight, for thy misery here and hereafter, doubt not. Thou hast promised, but not yet offered him a victim. Thus far thou art safe; but he will pursue thee, and think not to escape his vengeance. How to proceed is beyond my counsel. Should midnight come, thou wouldest see horrors in this chamber that might quail the stoutest heart. Thou art bereft of life or reason if thou tarry."

"I leave not without an attempt, even should I fail, to wrench her, who is dearer to me than either, from that demon's grasp. I will not hence alone."

"Alas! I fear there is little hope; yet shall he not escape yonder prison before to-morrow. Even his arts cannot convey him through its walls; the magician's body, if such he be, is subject to like impediments with our own. This night, for good or ill, is thine."

"To work, then, to work," said De Vessey, as though inspired with new energy, "to the rescue, and by this good cross," kissing the handle of his sword, "I defy ye!"

By main force he attempted, and, in the end, tore open the door of the cabinet. The grinning skeleton was before him, the miniature in its grasp. A moment's pause. The cavalier carefully surveyed his prize. Suspended by an iron chain, the links entwined round its bony arm, rendered the picture difficult, if not impossible, to detach without touching the limbs. Gathering fresh courage from the countenance and smile of his beloved, he snatched the portrait, but the wearer was too tenacious of the charmed treasure, and resisted his utmost efforts. He thought a savage,

a malicious grin crept upon his features. A smile more than usually hideous mocked him. From those hollow sockets, too, or his imagination played strange antics, a faint glare shot forth. A dizzy terror crept over him. His brain reeled. His energies were becoming prostrate; and unless one desperate attempt could be made, all hope of rescue were past. He sought the ebony wand, but, forgetful or incautious, laid hold of the chain which encircled the skeleton's wrist. A bell answered to the pressure, — a deep hollow reverberation, like a death-knell in his ear.

"Hark! that iron tongue, — lost — lost! Oh! mercy, mercy!" shrieked the death-painter, covering his eyes.

At this moment, De Vessey heard a noise like the jarring of bolts and hinges. Ere he was aware, the skeleton's arms were fastened round him; the doors closed, the floor gave way under his feet. He felt the pressure relaxing; he fell, the hissing wind rushed in his ears. Stunned with his fall, he lay for a while in the dark, scarcely able to move. It was not long ere he was able to grope about. Rotting carcases and bones met his touch — a noisome charnel-house gorged with human bodies in all the various stages of decay. His heart sickened with a fearful apprehension that he was left to perish by a lingering death, like those around him. Despair for the first time benumbed his faculties. His courage gave way at the dreadful anticipation, and he grasped the very carcase on which he trod for succour.

Suddenly, a loud yell burst above him. A blaze of burning timbers flashed forth, — crackling, they hissed, and fell into the vault. Through an opening overhead, he saw the skeleton seized by devouring flames. They twined, they clung round it. Their fork'y tongues licked the bones that appeared to writhe and crawl in living agony.

Soon the chain, which held the portrait, gave way, and it dropped at his feet unhurt. A shriek issued from the flaming cabinet, and he saw the painter with a burning

torch above, A maniac joy lighted up his features: he shouted to De Vessey, and with frantic gestures beckoned that he should escape.

"If thou canst climb yonder stair," he cried, "before the flames cut off thy retreat, thou art safe. See, Leonora is already free. Haste—this way—there,—there, now leap—mind thy footing, 'tis too frail, creep round, those rafters are unbroken; another spring, and thou mayest reach them in safety."

The flames were close upon him. He was nigh suffocated. A perilous attempt,—but, at length, he gained the upper floor, and his deliverer exclaimed, —

"Thanks, thanks, he is safe! by this good hand, too, that wrought your misery. Oh! that a life of penitence and prayer might atone for my guilt. It was a thought inspired by Heaven, prompted me to set on fire that insatiate demon, to whom my task-master offered those wretched victims, and every month a bride, on pain of his own destruction. What might be the nature of that skeleton form, or their compact, thou canst neither know nor understand. Even I, though nightly witnessing horrors which have given to youth the aspect and decrepitude of age, cannot explain. A connexion, if not inseparable, yet intimate as body and soul, existed between those demon-haunted bones, and yon monster who sought, and accomplished my ruin. What I have seen must not, cannot be told. My lips are for ever sealed. But the flames are fast gaining on us. Let us hasten, ere they prevent our retreat. The whole fabric will shortly be enveloped, and every reeord of this diabolical confederacy consumed. Go to thy lady-love. She is recovered, and, as one newly awakened from some terrific dream. With the earliest dawn hie thee to the prison lest *he* escape. Let him be instantly secured. When summoned I will not fail, to confront, to denounce the wretch. He cannot penetrate yonder walls, save by fraud or stratagem. How I have es-

caped death is one of the mysteries which time perchance may never develope. One might fancy the cunning leech who supplied the drug did play me false. Instead of poison mayhap, one of those potions of which we have heard, that so benumb and stupify the faculties, that for a space they mimic death—nor can any thing rouse or recover from its influence until the appointed time be past."

They hurried away as he spoke. De Vessey could scarcely wait until daylight. His first care was to secure the old sorcerer. He sought aid from the police, and, as far as might be, revealed the dreadful secret.

An immediate visit was made to the cell. On entering, its inmate was in bed, — a scorched, a blackened corpse!

It may be supposed, the lover was not long in attending on his mistress. She was free from disorder, and happily unconscious of what had passed during the interval, save that an ugly dream had troubled her. Nor was she aware that more than one night had elapsed. In a few days afterwards, De Vessey led her to the altar.

The mystery was never fully penetrated. That imposture, and partial insanity, might be involved, and have the greatest share in its development, is beyond doubt; but they cannot explain the whole of these diabolical proceedings. That the powers of darkness may have power over the bodies of wicked and abandoned men, cannot be denied.

Whether this narration discloses another instance of such mysterious agency, our readers must determine.

What the painter knew, was buried in eternal silence. The monks of La Trappe received a brother whose vows were never broken!

THE CRYSTAL GOBLET:

A TALE OF THE EMPEROR SEVERUS.

It was midnight,—yet a light was burning in a small chamber situated in one of the narrowest and least frequented streets of Eboracum,—then the metropolis of the world. York at that period being the residence of the Emperor Severus, his court and family were conveyed hither; and the government of the world transferred to an obscure island in the west: once the *ultima Thule* of civilization, its native inhabitants hardly yet emerged from a state of barbarism, and addicted to the most gross and revolting superstitions.

A lamp of coarse earthenware was fastened on a bronze stand, having several beaks, and of a boat-like shape. Near it stood the oil-vase for replenishing, almost empty,—while the wicks, charred and heavy with exuviae, looked as though for sometime untrimmed. On the same table was a Greek and a Coptick manuscript, an inkhorn, and the half of a silver penny, the Roman *symbolum*. Breaking a piece of money as a keepsake, between two friends, was, even at that period, a very ancient custom. A brass rhombus, used by magicians, lay on a *cathedra*, or easy chair, which stood as though suddenly pushed aside by its occupier in rising hastily from his studies. An iron chest was near, partly open, wherein papers and parchments lay tumbled about in apparent disorder. Vellum, so white and firm, as to curl

even with the warmth of the hand ; purple skins emblazoned in gold and silver, and many others, of rare workmanship, were scattered about with unsparing profusion. It was evidently the study, the *librarium* of some distinguished person, and consisted of an inner chamber beyond the court, having one window near the roof, and another opening into a small garden behind. From the ceiling there hung a dried ape, a lizard, and several uncouth, unintelligible reptiles, put together in shapes that nature's most fantastic forms never displayed. Vases of ointments, and unguents of strange odours, stood in rows, upon a marble slab on one side of the apartment. *Scrinia*, or caskets for the admission of rolls, and writing materials were deposited on shelves, forming a library of reference to the individual whose *sanctum* we are now describing: It was, apparently, undisturbed by any living occupant, save a huge raven, now roosting on a wooden perch, his head buried under a glossy tissue of feathers, and, to all appearance, immovable as the grinning and hideous things that surrounded him. A magpie, confined in a cage above the door, was taught to salute those who entered, with the word "*χαῖρε*," a Grecian custom, greatly in vogue amongst the most opulent of the Romans.

Ere long, there came a footstep,—and a gentle summons at the door. The bird gave the usual response ; and straightway entered a stout muscular figure, wrapped in a *chlamys*, fastened on the shoulder with a richly-embossed *fibula*. Beneath, was the usual light leathern cuirass, covered with scales of shining metal ; the centre, over the abdomen, ornamented with a gorgon's head, and other warlike devices ; a short sword, being stuck in his girdle. From the lowest part hung leathern straps, or *lumbrequins* highly wrought and embellished. He wore breeches or drawers, reaching to the knees, and his feet and the lower part of the leg were covered with the *cothurnus*, a sort of traveller's half-boot. A sumptuous mantle, made of leopard skin, was thrown

carelessly about his head, hardly concealing his features ; for the folds relaxing in some measure as he entered, showed a youthful countenance ; yet dark and ferocious, indicating a character of daring and vindictive energy ; and a disposition where forgiveness or remorse rarely tempered the fiercer passions. As he looked round, the raven raised his head on a sudden, and peering at him with that curious and familiar eye, so characteristic of the tribe, gave a loud and hollow croak, which again arrested the notice of the intruder.

“ Most auspicious welcome truly, ill omened bird. Is thy master visible ? ”

There was no reply ; and the inquirer, after a cautious glance round the chamber, sat down, evidently disconcerted by this unexpected reception. Scarcely seated, he felt the clasp on his shoulder suddenly risen, as though by an intruder from behind. Looking round, he saw the raven with the bauble in his beak, hopping off with great alacrity to his perch. The magpie set up a loud scream as though vexed he was not a participator in the spoil. The owner, angry at his loss, pursued the thief, who defied every attempt to regain it ; getting far above his reach ; ever and anon the same ominous croak sounding dismally through the gloom by which he was concealed. Finding it fruitless, the stranger gave up the pursuit, and again sat down, examining carelessly the papers which lay open for perusal. But it might seem these feathered guardians were entrusted with the care of their master’s chamber during his absence.

“ Beware ! ” said the same querulous voice, that before accosted him. Looking up, he saw the magpie, his neck stretched to the utmost through the bars of his cage. and in the act of repeating the injunction.

“ ’Tis an ill augur to my suit,” he muttered hastily. “ Destiny ! ” Starting up at the word, which he spake aloud, he clenched his hand.

“ The inexorable gods may decree, but would it not be

worthy of my purpose to brave them ; to render even fate itself subservient to me !”

He hurried to and fro across the chamber with an agitated step. Suddenly he stood still, in the attitude of listening. He drew the folds of his mantle closer about his head, when by another entrance, there approached a tall majestic figure, clad in dark vestments, who without speaking, came near and stood before him. A veil of rich net-work fell gracefully below his mantle, being in that era, the distinctive garb of soothsayers and diviners. His hair, for he was an Asiatic, was twisted in the shape of a mitre, investing his form with every advantage from outward appearances.

“I would know,” said he, “by what right thou art at this untimely hour, an intruder on my privacy ?”

“By a will, which even thou darest not disobey,” was the answer.

“It is past midnight. Knowest thou of my long watching, and the dark portents of the stars ?”

“Nay !” But passing, I saw the door of the vestibule partly open. The fates were propitious. I crossed the court, intending to consult the most famous soothsayer in the emperor’s dominions.”

“Peradventure ’tis no accidental meeting. To-night I have read the stars, the book of heaven. Comest thou not, blind mortal at their bidding ?”

“I have neither skill nor knowledge in the art ——,”

The stranger hesitated, as though he had as lief the conversation was resumed by the diviner himself.

“Thy father. What of him ?” said the Chaldean, with a look, as though he had penetrated his inmost thoughts.

“True, ’tis mine errand,” said the intruder. “But the event ?”

“The augury is not complete !”

“Thine auguries are like my good fortune,—long in compassing. The best augur I trow, is this good steel. I would sooner trust it than the best thou canst bestow.”

"Rash mortal. Impatience will be thy destruction.
—Listen!"

The raven hopped down upon his shoulder. A low guttural sound appeared to come from this ill-omened bird. The augur bent his ear. Sounds shaped themselves into something like articulation, and the following couplet was distinctly heard :—

"While the eagle is in his nest, the eaglet shall not prevail,
Nor shall the eagle be smitten in his eyrie."

"Azor," said the warrior, clenching his sword, "these three times hast thou mocked me, and by the immortal gods thou diest!"

"Impious one! I could strike thee powerless as the dust thou treadest on. Give me the bauble," said he, addressing the raven. The bird immediately gave the clasp he had purloined into his master's hand.

"This shall witness between us," continued he. "Dare to lift thy hand, the very palace shall bear testimony to thy treason—that thou hast sought me for purposes too horrible even for thy tongue to utter. Hence. When least expected I may meet thee. If it had not been for thy mother's sake, and for my vow, the emperor ere this had been privy to it."

Stung with rage and disappointment, he put back his weapon, and with threats and imprecations departed.

On a couch inlaid with ivory and pearl, within a vaulted chamber in the Prætorian Palace of the royal city, lay the emperor, in a coverlid of rich stuff. Disease had crushed his body, but the indomitable spirit was unquenched. Tossing and disturbed, at length he started from his bed. Calling to his chamberlain, he demanded if there had not been footsteps in the apartment. The ruler of the world, whose nod could shake the nations, and whose word was the arbiter of life or death to millions of his fellow-men, lay here—startled at the passing of a sound, the falling of a shadow! His face, whose chief characteristic was power,

—that strength and determination of spirit which all acknowledge, and but few comprehend — was furrowed with deeper marks than care had wrought. Sixty years had moulded the steady and inflexible purpose of his soul in lines too palpable to be misunderstood. His beard was short and grizzled; and a swarthy hue, betraying his African birth, was now become sallow, and even sickly in the extreme; but an eagle eye still beamed in all its fierceness and rapacity from under his scanty brows. His nose was not of the Roman sort, like the beak of that royal bird, but thick and even clumsy, lacking that sharp and predacious intellect generally associated with forms of this description.

Such was Septimus Severus, then styled on a coin just struck, “*BRITANNICVS MAXIMVS*,” in commemoration of a great victory gained over the Caledonians, whom he had driven beyond Adrian’s wall. Though suffering from severe illness, he was carried in a horse-litter; and, marching from York at the head of his troops, penetrated almost to the extremity of the island, where he subdued that fierce and intractable nation the Scots. Returning, he left his son Caracalla to superintend the building of a stone wall across the island, in place of the earthen ramparts called Adrian’s;—a structure, when completed, that effectually resisted the inroads of those barbarians for a considerable period.

He called a third time to Virius Lupus, one, the most confidential of his attendants, to whom many of the most important secrets of the state were entrusted.

“Thrice have I heard it Virius. Again, and again, it seems to mock and elude my grasp.” He paused: the officer yet listening with becoming reverence. The Emperor continued, more like one whose thoughts had taken utterance, than as if he were addressing the individual before him.

“When I led the Pannonian legions to victory; when

Rome opened her gates at my command; when I fought my way through blood to the throne,—I quailed not then! Now,—satiated with power, careless of fame, the prospects of life closed, and for ever,—when all that is left for me to do is to die,—behold, I tremble at the shaking of a leaf! I start, even at the footstep that awakes me!”

“Long live the Emperor!” said the cringing secretary. Interrupting him, as he would have proceeded with the customary adulations, the emperor again continued as though hardly noticing his presence.

“Caracalla yet remains with the army. Once I censured the misguided clemency of Marcus, who, by an act of justice might have prevented the miseries that his son Caligula brought upon the empire; and yet I, even I,” said the haughty monarch, bitterly, “nourish the very weakness that in others I despise!”

He dashed away the sweat from his brow, ashamed of the weakness he could not quell.

“He hath sought your life,” said the wily sycophant.

“He hath!—Traitor! parricide! the distinctions he would have earned. But my better genius triumphed, and history hath been spared this infamy. It may be, this temporary exile from our court, with the northern army, shall tame his spirit to submission. My life or his, once the bitter alternative, may yet be avoided.”

“But may not his presence with the army be impolitic, should he turn the weapon wherewith you have girded him to your own hurt?”

“’Tis an evil choice; whichever way I turn, mischief is before me.”

“Were it not best that he be recalled?”

“What! to plot and practise against my life? To mount upon my reeking body to the throne! He will not reign with Geta. The proud boy disdains a divided empire.—And was not mine own soul fashioned in the same mould? When Niger would have ruled in Syria, and Albinus in

Britain, I scattered their legions to the winds, and levelled their hopes with their pride. 'Tis nature : and shall I, the author of his being, punish him for mine own gift?"

He raised himself on his couch. The fierce blaze of ambition broke the dark cloud of bodily infirmities, and the monarch and the tyrant again dilated his almost savage features.

The secretary, used to these fiery moods, stood awaiting his commands. The emperor, as though exhausted, sunk down on his pillow, exclaiming,—

"I have governed the world, but I cannot govern a wayward heart!"

Thus did he often lament, and provoke himself the more with these vain regrets; forgetting that, if he had exercised the same firmness in his private as public capacity, the government of his own house would have been easy as the government of the world.

"Virius Lupus there is danger,—and to-night. As I have told thee, the stars do betoken mischief. But the peril is at my threshold. Let Caracalla remain; so shall we avert his weapon. Should the assassin come, it will not be with the blow of a parricide. Thou mayst retire to thy couch, but, first, let the guards be doubled, the watchword and countersign changed. And, hark thee, tell the tribune that he look well to the *tessera*, and have the right count from the inspectors. Should despatches come from Rome, let the messenger have immediate audience.

Again the emperor stretched himself on the couch, and again his slumbers were interrupted. A murmur was heard along the halls and passages where the guards were stationed. The noise grew louder, approaching the very door of the royal chamber. The monarch started, as from a dream, and the door at that moment opened. The Chaldæan soothsayer stood before him.

"Azor!" said the Emperor, "at this hour? What betides such unseemly greeting?"

"Cæsar trembles on his throne; but the world quakes not! The angel of death is at thy door. Caracalla hath returned."

"Returned? Surely thy wits are disturbed. Caracalla! Aye, even yesterday, we had despatches from the camp."

"Howbeit, he is at thy threshold. The sound of his feet is behind me."

"Impossible! the mischief is not from him."

"Even now I looked in the crystal, and behold——" The soothsayer paused. Horror was gathering on his features. The light suspended above him began to quiver; and, as it wavered to and fro, his countenance assumed a tremulous and distorted expression.

Severus watched the result with no little anxiety. The magician drew a crystal cup from his girdle. Looking in, apparently with great alarm, he presented it at arm's length to the emperor, who beheld a milky cloud slowly undulating within the vessel.

"Take this," said the soothsayer, "and tell me what thou seest."

The monarch took it at his bidding. The cloud seemed to be clearing away, as the morning mist before the sun.

"I see nothing," said the emperor, "but a silver clasp at the bottom."

"And the owner?"

"As I live," said the astonished parent, drawing forth a curiously embossed clasp from the goblet, and holding it out to the light, "this token of rare workmanship did the Empress present to Caracalla, ere he departed. Whence came it? and wherefore hast thou brought it hither?"

"A silent witness to my word. Within the hour thy son returns; and——" The seer's voice grew more ominous whilst he spake. "Beware!" there's mischief in the wind. The raven scents his prey afar off!"

"If in this thou art a true prophet, I will give thee

largess; but if a lying spirit of divination possess thee, my power is swift to punish as to reward."

"I heed not either. Do I serve thee for lucre? Look thee, in less time than I would occupy in telling thee on't I could fill thy palace with gold and silver! and do I covet thy paltry treasures? The kingdoms of this world are his whom I serve, and shall I seek thy perishing honours? Behold, I leave this precious goblet as my pledge. I must away. Thou shalt render it back on my return. I would not part with that treasure for the dominion of the Cæsars. Beware thou let it not forth from thy sight, for there be genii who are bound to serve its possessor, and, peradventure it shall give thee warning when evil approaches."

The soothsayer departed, and the emperor laid the crystal goblet on a table opposite his couch. He clapped his hands, and the chief secretary approached.

"What said our messenger from the north? Read again the despatch they brought yesterday."

The secretary drew forth a roll from his cabinet, and read as follows:—

"Again the supreme gods have granted victory to our legions. Favoured by the darkness and their boats, the barbarians attacked us from three separate points. Led on by Fingal and his warriors, whom beforetime we erroneously reported to be slain, they crossed over to the station where we had pitched our tents. But the Roman eagle was yet watchful. Though retreating behind our last defences, we left not the field until a thousand, the choicest of our foes, bit the dust. Morning showed us the red-haired chief and his bards, but they were departing, and their spears were glittering on the mountains."

"Enough!" said the emperor. "Caracalla tarries yet with the camp. Our person is not menaced by his hand.

Prithee send a brasier hither. The night is far spent, and slumber will not again visit these eyelids."

A bronze tripod was brought, supported by sphinxes, the worship of Isis being a fashionable idolatry at that period. Charred wood was then placed in a round dish, pierced with holes, and perfumes thrown in to correct the smell. The emperor commanded that he should be left alone. Covering his shoulders with a richly-embroidered mantle, he took from behind his pillow a Greek treatise on the occult sciences, to the study of which he was passionately addicted.

It is said of him, by historians, that he was guided by his skill in judicial astrology to the choice of the reigning empress, having lost his first wife when governor of the Lyonnese Gaul. Finding that a lady of Emesa, in Syria, one Julia Domna, had what was termed "a royal nativity," he solicited and obtained her hand, thus making the prophecy the means of its accomplishment.

A woman of great beauty, and strong natural acquirements, she was, at the same time, the patron of all that was noble and distinguished in the philosophy and literature of the age. It was even said that, secretly, she was a favourer of the Christians. Be this as it may, we do not find she ever became a professor of the faith.

Sleep, that capricious guest, which comes unbidden, but not invited, was just stealing over the monarch's eyelids, when the roll fell from his grasp. The unexpected movement startled him. His eye fell on the bright crystal opposite. He thought a glimmer was moving in the glass. He remembered the words of the sage, and his eye was riveted on the mystic goblet. A sudden flash was reflected from it. He started forward, when a naked sword fell on the couch! the stroke he only escaped by having so accidentally changed his place. The glass had revealed the glitter of the blade behind him, and he was indebted to a few inches of space for his life!

Looking round, he beheld a masked figure preparing to repeat the stroke. Severus, with his usual courage and presence of mind, threw his mantle across the assassin's sword. He cried out, and the chamber was immediately filled with guards; but, whether from treachery or inadvertence, the traitor was no where to be found. He had escaped, leaving his weapon entangled in the folds of the mantle. On examination, the emperor's surprise was visibly increased, when he recognised the sword as one belonging to Caracalla! The soothsayer's prediction was apparently fulfilled: To the emperor's superstitious apprehensions the crystal goblet was charged with his safety. But, lo! on being sought for, the charmed cup was gone!

The next morning, as the sun was just rising over the green wolds, and the fresh air came brisk and sharply on the traveller's cheek, a stranger was noticed loitering through the narrow streets of the imperial city. He had passed the great Calcarian or western gate, from which the statue of the reigning emperor, on that memorable morning, was found razed from its pedestal. The outer and inner faces of the gate were whitened for the writing of edicts and proclamations by the government scribes, and likewise for the public notices of minor import, these being daubed on the walls with various degrees of skill, in red or black pigments, according to the nature of the decrees that were issued by the Prætor and the caprice of the artist.

On that morning a number of idlers had assembled about the gate. The statue of the emperor, fallen prostrate, had been removed, and an edict promptly supplied, to the purport that an impious hand, having attempted the life of the monarch, a reward of one hundred thousand *sestertia* would be the price of his apprehension. Another reward of the like sum was offered for the discovery of a crystal goblet, stolen from the emperor's chamber.

The individual we have just noticed wore the common sleeved tunic of coarse wool ; over it was a cloak buckled on the right shoulder, the yarn being died in such wise that, when woven, it might resemble the skin of a brindled ox—such was the dress of the ancient Britons. His head was covered with a close cap, but his feet were naked ; and the only weapon he bore was a two-handed sword, stuck in his girdle.

Ere he passed the gate, it might be supposed that his business and credentials would have been rigidly scrutinised by the guards ; but he merely showed a large signet ring to the superior officer, and was immediately allowed to pass. He soon came to the wooden bridge over the river, now kept by a body of the Prætorian guards. Here, on attempting to pass, he was immediately seized. With an air of stupid or affected concern, the prisoner drew the same signet from his hand, the sight of which again procured him immediate access. The bridge was crossed, and, after passing along the narrow, winding streets, he came to a small triumphal arch leading into the Forum. This was an area of but mean extent, surrounded by a colonnade, serving as a market for all sorts of wares, and the trades carried on under its several porticoes. The outer walls, behind the columns, were painted in compartments, black and red, and here a number of citizens were assembled. There was hurrying to and fro. Soldiers and messengers, even so early, were bustling about with ominous activity. The stranger looked on for awhile, with a vacant sort of curiosity, then, turning to the left hand, went forward towards the gate of the palace. On a corner of the building he saw another edict to the same purport as before. Near it was the announcement of a spectacle at the theatre : the gift of a wealthy patrician for the amusement and gratification of the people. Still the stranger passed on, apparently uninterested by all, until he came to the outer gate,

where he merely paused a few moments, as though to observe the movements of the soldiers and the changing of the guard. The sound of the trumpet seemed to attract especial notice from this barbarian, whose uncouth air and rude manners drew upon him the gaze of many as they passed by. He now turned into a narrower street behind the palace, and here he sought out a common tavern, where the chequers, newly painted on the door posts, betokened good entertainment for travellers. Having entered, the hostess, whose tucked-up dress and general appearance, Martial, in his epigrams, so cunningly describes, brought him a vase or flagon of wine. It was not of the true Falernian flavour, as may be readily surmised, but a mixture of stuff, which can hardly be described, of nauseous taste, smelling abominably of resin or pitch, and flavoured with myrrh and other bitters. Both hot and cold refectations solicited the taste, and regaled the sight of the visitor. Flitches of bacon were suspended from above, and fire-wood stuffed between the rafters, black and smoky with the reeking atmosphere below. At his own request, the stranger was installed in a small chamber behind the public room, where stood a couch, a three-footed table, and a lavatory. Here he was served with radishes, cheese, and roasted eggs, in earthen vessels, with a relish of cornels in pickle. Ere this refection was brought in, the table was rubbed over with a sprig of mint, and the coarse pottery betrayed an exquisite odour of thyme and garlic.

After the needful refreshments and ablutions, he sallied forth, first inquiring for the residence of the Chaldean soothsayer, before whose door, in due time, he arrived. The gate leading to the vestibule was open, and he entered by a narrow passage terminated by a small inner court. He paused, and looked round. No fountain played in the centre; a clump of rank, unwholesome grass was the only decoration, but the object of his search was a crooked,

wooden staircase, which led to a sort of gallery above. After a little hesitation, he ascended ; his country manners showing a determination to persevere until fairly delivered of his errand. A door at the extremity of the gallery stood ajar, and through this he made bold to enter. A Numidian slave, dwarfish and deformed, was sweeping his master's chamber. He stopped short as the barbarian, with a stupid and wondering look, entered the apartment. After surveying the new comer with an air of deliberate scrutiny, the dwarf burst forth into a violent fit of laughter.

"Mercury hath sent us precious handsel this morning, truly," said he, when his diversion was concluded. "A pretty hound to scent out master's lost goods. The gods do verily mock us in thy most gracious person."

The visitor looked on with dismay during this ungracious and taunting speech. At length he stammered forth,

"Thy master, is he not the Chaldean to whom my mistress, knowing I was bound for the city, hath sent me privily with a message?"

The Briton spoke this in a sort of guttural and broken Latin, which the apish dwarf mimicked in the most mischievous and provoking way imaginable. The messenger, irritated beyond endurance, placed both hands on his weapon, but his antagonist, with little ado, tripped up his heels, and the poor aborigine was completely at the mercy of this grotesque specimen of humanity.

Grinning over him with spite and mischief in his looks, the dwarf stamped on the floor ; presently there came two slaves, who, without further notice than a blow now and then when resistance was offered, bound him with stout cords, and bade him lie there until he should be further disposed of. Inquiry was vain as to the cause of this treatment. Bound hand and foot, he was then tossed with little ceremony, and less compunction, into a corner of the room ; and there left to bemoan his hard fate. Perched just above

his head, sat the cunning raven, who eyed him as though with serious intentions of pecking at him in his present defenceless condition. He was soon aware of this additional source of alarm, and as the bird's eye brightened and twinkled with greedy anticipation, he rubbed his rapacious beak on the perch, apparently whetting it for the feast. He then jumped down on the floor, and hopping close to his victim, gave a hoarse and dismal croak, a death warning, it might be, to the unfortunate captive. He tried to burst his bonds, and shrieked out in the extremity of his alarm. His struggles kept the bird at a distance, but it continued to survey him with such a longing, liquorish eye, that the poor culprit felt himself already writhing, like another Prometheus, under the beak of his destroyer. His terror increased. It might be some demon sent to torment him; and this conviction strengthened when he saw the dismal and hideous things that surrounded him. Just as his agony was wrought to the highest pitch, he heard footsteps. Even the sound was some relief. He knew not what further indignities—not to say violence—he might expect; but at all events, there would be a change, and it was hailed as an alleviation to his misery.

The soothsayer presented himself, attended by the ugly dwarf.

"A stupid barbarian thou sayest the Fates have sent us?" said the Chaldean, as he entered. "Bridle thine impious tongue, Merodac; what the dweller in immortal fire hath decreed, will be accomplished, though by weak and worthless creatures such as these. What ho! stranger, whence art thou? and why art thou moved so early across our threshold?"

"My lord," said the prisoner, in a tone of entreaty, "these bonds are unlawful—I am a freed man. Though a Briton, I am no slave, and I beseech you to visit this indignity on that rogue, who hath so scurvily entreated me."

"I was privy to it, else would he not have dared this."

"And to what end, good master?"

"That we may have an answer propitious to our suit."

"What! are ye about to sacrifice me to your infernal deities!" cried the captive, almost frantic with the anticipation.

"My friend, thou art bound for another purpose; to wit that, through thy instrumentality, we may discover the divining cup the emperor hath lost. Knowest thou aught of this precious crystal?" inquired the Chaldean, with a searching look.

But it were vain to describe the astonishment of the victim. He looked almost in doubt of his own identity, or as if he were trying to shake off the impression of some hideous dream. At length he replied,

"'Tis some device surely, that ye may slay me!"

He wept; and the tears trickling down his cheek, were indeed piteous to behold," "I know not," said he, "your meaning. Let me depart."

"Nay," said the soothsayer, "thou mayest content thyself as thou list, but the cup shall be found, and that by thy ministry. The emperor hath offered rewards, nigh to the value of three silver talents, for the recovery, and assuredly thou shalt be held in durance until it be regained."

"And by whose authority?" inquired the Briton.

"Why, truly, it becometh thee to ask, seeing thou art a party interested in the matter. The emperor, in whose care the jewel was left, hath sworn by the River Styx, that unless the cup be brought back to the palace ere to-morrow's dawn, he will punish the innocent with the guilty; and that with no sparing hand. He hath already laid hands on some of the more wealthy citizens, and amerced them in divers sums; others are detained as hostages for suspected persons who are absent from the city. The loss of this cup being

connected with a daring attempt on the emperor's life by some unknown hand, he doth suspect that the very palace wants purging from treason ; yet where to begin, or on whom to fasten suspicion, he knoweth not. Mine art has hitherto failed me in the matter. The tools they work with baffle my skill, save that the oracle I consult commanded that I should lay hold on the first male person that came hither to-day, and by his ministry the lost treasure should be restored. Shouldest thou refuse, thou art lost ; for assuredly the emperor will not be slow to punish thy contumacy."

The miserable captive fell into great perplexity at this discourse. He vowed he knew no more of the lost cup than the very stones he trod on ; that he had come since nightfall from his master, Lucius Claudius, lieutenant and standard-bearer of the sixth legion, then at Isurium,* on a mere casual errand to the city ; and that his mistress, who was a British lady of noble birth, had instructed him, at the same time, to consult the soothsayer on some matters relative to her nativity, which the sage had calculated some years back. Almost a stranger in these parts, how could he pretend to begin the search ? He begged piteously for his release ; promising, and with great sincerity, that he would never set foot in this inhospitable region again. The magician inquired his name.

"Cedric with the ready foot," was the reply. Unmoved by his entreaties, the soothsayer said he had the emperor's command for the use of every method he could devise for the recovery of this precious and priceless jewel ; and that, furthermore, the safety, and even lives of many innocent persons depended on the stranger's exertions. and the speedy execution of his mission. But how to begin, or in what quarter to commence the search, was a riddle worthy of the Sphinx. A most unexpected and novel situation for

* Aldborough.

this rude dweller in woods and morasses, to be suddenly thrust forth into a mighty city, without guide or direction, more ignorant of his errand than any of its inhabitants. Besides, he was not without a sort of incipient and instinctive dread, that the catastrophe might procure him an interview with the emperor; and he was filled with apprehension lest his own carcase might afford a special treat, a sacrifice to the brutal appetite of the spectators in the amphitheatre, after the manner of the *bestiarii*, or gladiators, of whom he had often heard. Even could he have gotten word of this mishap to his master, he was by no means certain it would be attended with any beneficial result. The time was too short, and the will and mandate of the emperor would render futile any attempt to obtain deliverance from this quarter.

A few moments sufficed for these considerations. The glance of the mind, when on the rack for expedients, is peculiarly keen, and hath an eagle-like perception that appears as though it could pierce to the dim and distant horizon of its hopes and apprehensions..

"Unbind these withes," said the captive, "I cannot begin the search in this extremity."

"Merodac, undo these bonds; and see thou guard thy prisoner strictly: — thy life answers for his safe keeping."

The dwarf, who seemed never so well pleased as when tormenting the more fortunate and better shapen of his species, unloosed the cords with something of the like feeling and intention as a cat when liberating some unfortunate mouse from her talons.

"There's a chance of rare sport i' the shows to-morrow," said the ugly jailor. "We are sure of *thee*, anyhow. — Didst ever see the criminals fight with wolves, Hyrcanian bears, and such like? I would not miss the sight for the best feather in my cap."

The cruel slave here rubbed his hands, and his yellow

eyes glistened with the horrible anticipation. His victim groaned aloud.

"I'll tell thee a rare device," continued he, "whereby thou mayest escape being eaten, at least a full hour ; and we shall have the longer sport. Mind thee, the beasts do not always get the carcases for dinner. If they be cowardly, and show little fight, we give the dead bestiarii to the dogs. I remember me well the last we threw into the emperor's kennel, the dogs made such a fighting for the carrion, that he ordered each of us a flagellation for the disturbance. Let me see, there was — ay —" here the knave began to count the number of shows and human sacrifices he had seen, recounting every particular with the most horrible minuteness. Cedric felt himself already in the gripe of the savages, and his flesh verily quivered on his bones.

Brutal and demoralising were those horrid spectacles. The people of Rome, it has been well observed by a modern writer, were generally more corrupt by many degrees than has been usually supposed possible. Many were the causes which had been gradually operating towards this result, and amongst the rest, the continual exhibition of scenes where human blood was poured forth like water. The continual excitement of the populace demanded fresh sacrifices, until even these palled upon the cruel appetites of the multitude. Even the more innocent exhibitions, where brutes were the sufferers, could not but tend to destroy all the finer sensibilities of the nature. "Five thousand wild animals, torn from their native abodes in the wilderness and the forest," have been turned out for mutual slaughter in one single exhibition at the amphitheatre. Sometimes the *lanista* or person who exhibited the shows, and provided the necessary supplies, by way of administering specially to the gratification of the populace, made it known, as a particular favour, that the whole of these should be slaughtered. These, however, soon ceased to stimulate the appetite for blood. From such com-

bats, "the transition was inevitable to those of men, whose nobler and more varied passions spoke directly, and by the intelligible language of the eye, to human spectators; and from the frequent contemplation of these authorised murders, in which a whole people—women as much as men, and children intermingled with both, looked on with leisurely indifference, with anxious expectation, or with rapturous delight, whilst below them were passing the direct sufferings of humanity, and not seldom its dying pangs, it was impossible to expect a result different from that which did, in fact, take place—universal hardness of heart, obdurate depravity, and a twofold degradation of human nature, the natural sensibility and the conscientious principle." "Here was a constant irritation, a system of provocation to the appetite for blood, such as in other nations are connected with the rudest stages of society, and with the most barbarous modes of warfare."

"Whither wilt thou that we direct our steps?" inquired Merodac, with mock submission, when the cords were unloosed.

"Lead the way—I care not," said his moody victim, "'tis as well that I follow."

A bitter and scornful laugh accompanied the reply of the dwarf.

"That were a pretty device truly,—to let thee lag behind, and without thy tether. Ah, ah," chuckled the squire as they left the chamber; "Diogenes and his lantern was a wise man's search compared with ours."

How the slave came to be so learned in Grecian lore, we know not. His further displays of erudition were cut short by the soothsayer, who cried out to him as they departed,

"Remember, thy carcase for his, if he return not."

Now, in York, at this day, may be observed, where an

angle of the walls abuts on the "Mint Yard," a building named "the Multangular Tower," and supposed to have been one of the principal fortifications of the city. However this might be, its structure has puzzled not a little, even those most conversant with antiquities. The area was not built up all round, but open towards the city. The foundations of a wall have latterly been discovered, dividing it lengthwise through the centre, and continued, for some distance, into the town; so that the whole may not inaptly be represented by a Jew-trump — the tongue being the division, the circular end the present Multangular Tower, continued by walls on each side. This building, we have every reason to conjecture, was the Greek *stadium* or Roman circus, which authors tell us was a narrow piece of ground shaped like a staple; the round end called the barrier. The wall dividing it lengthwise is the *spina*, or flat ridge, running through the middle, which was generally a low wall, and sometimes merely a mound of earth. This was usually decorated with statues of gods, columns, votive altars, and the like. As a corroboration of this opinion, there have been found here several small statues, altars, and other figures, betokening a place of public resort or amusement.

The circus was not used merely for horse and chariot-races, but likewise for wrestling — the *caestus*, and other athletic games. It was noted as the haunt of fortune-tellers, and thither the poorer people used to resort, and hear their fortunes told.*

Near this place stood the barracks, or *castra*. Long ranges of rooms, divided into several stories, the doors of each chamber opening into one common gallery, ascended by a wooden staircase.

Hither we must conduct our readers, at the close of the

* Lubinus in Juven. p. 294.

day on whose inauspicious morning "Cedric with the ready foot," was placed in such jeopardy.

The whole city meanwhile had been astir. The emperor's wrath and desire of revenge were excited to the utmost pitch. He suspected treachery even amongst the Prætorian guards, — his favourite and best-disciplined troops ; and there was an apprehension of some terrible disgrace attaching even to them. Still, nothing further transpired implicating the soldiery, save that the assassin had escaped, and, apparently, through the very midst of the guard ; yet no one chose to accuse his fellow, or say by whose means this mysterious outlet was contrived. Not even to his most confidential minister did the emperor reveal the discovery of his son's weapon. Neither that son, nor his guilty accomplices, if any, could be found ; and the day was fast closing upon the monarch's threat, that on the morrow his vengeance should have its full work, unless the crystal goblet was restored.

There had been a public spectacle at the theatre, but the emperor was not present ; and such was the consternation of the whole city, that the performance was but scantily attended. The city was apparently on the eve of some sad catastrophe, and the whole population foreboding some fearful event.

In the circus were yet some stray groups, who, having little employment of their own, were listening for news, and loitering about, either for mischief or amusement.

In one part was exhibited a narrow wooden box, not unlike to our puppet-show, wherein a person was concealed, having figures made of wood and earthenware, that seemed to act and speak, to the great wonder and diversion of the audience.

As the rays of the declining sun smote upon the city walls and the white sails of the barks below, there came into the circus the dwarf, who had charge of Cedric. The

captive now looked like a sort of appendage to his person — being strapped to his arm by a stout thong of bull's hide, such as was used for correcting refractory slaves. The hours allotted for search were nearly gone. Day was drawing to a close, and Cedric had done little else than bemoan his hard fate. The whole day had been spent in wandering from place to place, urged on by the scoffs and jeers of his companion. Some furtive attempts to escape had been the cause of his present bondage. Hither, at length, they arrived. Tired and distressed, he sat down on one of the vacant benches, and gave vent to his sorrows in no very careful or measured language.

“What can I do?” said he, “a stranger in this great city — to set me a-finding what I never knew? A grain of wheat in a barn full of chaff, mayhap — a needle in a truss of hay — anything I might find, but what was sheer impossible. And now am I like to be thrown to the dogs, like a heap of carrion!”

“But the oracle, friend.”

“Plague on the oracle, for ——” Here his speech was interrupted; for happening to look up, he saw, as he fancied, the eyes of one of the little figures in the show-box ogling him, and making mouths in such wise as to draw upon him the attention of the spectators, now roaring with laughter at his expense. Reckless of consequences, and almost furious from sufferings, he suddenly jumped up, and dragging the dwarf along with him, made a desperate blow at the mimic, which, in a moment, laid sprawling a whole company of little actors, together with the prime mover himself, and the showman outside to boot. The fray, as may readily be conceived, waxed loud and furious. The owners and bystanders not discriminating as to the main cause of the attack, would have handled both the keeper and the captive very roughly, had not the noise awakened the attention of the soldiers in the neighbouring barracks. Hearing the

affray, a party ran to ascertain the cause of the disturbance, and seeing two men whom a whole crowd had combined to attack, concluded they were culprits, and forthwith hailed them before the captain of the guard, a centurion, Diogenes Verecundus by name.

Cedric and the dwarf, being rescued from a sound beating, began to abuse one another, as the cause of the disturbance; but the officer, by dint of threats and inquiries, soon learned the truth of the matter.

"Thank the stars, I shall be rid of this pestilence to-morrow," said Merodac; "my master could not have found me such another; and how the Fates could pitch upon such a sorry cur for the business, seems passing strange. If he find the cup, I'll be beaten to a jelly in it. Thy carcass will be meat for the emperor's hounds to-morrow."

"If, as thou sayest," said the centurion, "thou art so mightily weary of thy charge, leave him to my care; I would fain have some discourse with him privily, touching what thou hast spoken."

The slave hesitated.

"On the word of a Roman soldier he shall be forthcoming. Tell thy master that Verecundus the centurion, hath taken thy prisoner captive. Here is money for thee."

The Ethiop showed his teeth, like ivory studs on a coral band, while the rings shook in his wrinkled ears, as he took the largess. Yet his brow contracted, and he hung his head. He hesitated to unloose the bonds.

"By what token?" he at length inquired.

"By this!" said the centurion, taking up a thong for his correction. "Stay," continued he, laying it down, "I will not punish thee undeservedly. Take these, they will bear thee harmless with thy master."

The dwarf took the writing thankfully, and made the best of his way to the dwelling of the soothsayer.

The officer now beckoned Cedric that he should follow.

In a low room by the guard-chamber at the gate, the following conversation took place.

"There is evil denounced us of a truth," said Verecundus; "but it may be the gods have sent thee hither for our rescue, as the oracle hath said."

The Briton fixed his wondering eyes on the soldier, whilst he continued.

"I have pondered the words well, and if thou prove trusty, ere this night pass, the plot shall be discovered, and the ringleaders secured. We have need of such an one as thou—a stranger, whom they will not suspect, and will use the intelligence he obtains with a vigilant and cunning eye. There is work for thee, which, if well done, may bring thee to great wealth and honour. If thou fail, we fall together in the same ruin. There is a plot against the emperor; and one which hath its being, ay, in the very secrets of the palace. Those nearest him, I am well assured, are the chief movers in the conspiracy. 'Tis this makes it so perilous to discover, and without a fitting agent the mischief will not be overcome. I have thought to throw myself at the emperor's feet, but having no proof withal to support my suspicions, I should, in all likelihood, fall a sacrifice to my own fidelity."

"But how," asked the bewildered Cedric, "shall I discover them?" Verily, it doth seem that to-day I am destined to work out impossibilities. How it comes to pass that a poor ignorant wretch like myself, should compass these things, it faileth my weak fancy to discover!"

"The soothsayer's speech is not lightly to be regarded. Hark thee, knave! Is life precious unto thee?"

"Yea, truly is it. I have a wife and children, besides a few herds and other live stock, likewise sundry beeves i'the forest. But, unless I can find favour in your eyes, my goods, alas! I am not like to see again."

"Nor wilt thou, peradventure, again behold the light of

yon blessed sun which hath just gone down. The shades of evening are upon us, and the shadows of death are upon thine eyelids ; for, hark thee, I do suspect some treasonable message in thine errand to the city."

Cedric, with a look of terror and incredulity, stammered out,

"As I live, I know not thy meaning!"

"Thou art in my power ; and, unless thou servest me faithfully, thou diest a cruel and fearful death. What was the exact message wherewith thou wast entrusted?"

The Briton's countenance brightened as he replied,

"I give it thee, with right good will. No treason lurks there, I trow. 'Take this,' said my master, yesternight, giving me a signet ring ; 'take it to York by day-break. At the gate show it to the guard. If they let thee pass, well. If not, return, for there is mischief in the city. At the bridge, shouldest thou get so far, again show it, where, I doubt not, thou shalt find thereby a ready passage. Seek thee out some by-tavern, where thou mayest refresh ; then, about mid-day go into the street called the goldsmiths', and there inquire for one Caius Lupus, the empress's jeweller. Show him the signet, and mark what he shall tell thee.'"

"Thou hast given him the signet then?" said the centurion, sharply.

"Nay. For my mistress, as ill luck would have it, hearing of my journey, and she having had some knowledge of the soothsayer's art aforetime, bade me consult him ere my errand was ready with the goldsmith, and deliver a pressing request for the horoscope which had been long promised. What passed then, as thou knowest, is the cause of my calamity."

"But didst thou not search out the dwelling of this same Caius, and do thine errand?"

"I did. But in the straits which I endured, I was not careful to note the time. An hour past mid-day, I sought

out his dwelling; but he was gone to the palace on urgent business with the empress, nor was it known when he might return."

"Sayest thou so, friend? I would like to look at this same potent talisman."

Cedric drew forth the ring. It was a beautiful onyx, on which, engraven with exquisite workmanship, was a head of the youthful Caracalla, encircled by a laurel wreath, showing marks of the most consummate skill.

"Was thine errand told to the soothsayer?" was the next inquiry.

"Verily nay," said the messenger; "there was little space for parley ere I was thrust forth."

"He saw not the signet, then?"

"Of a truth it has not been shown, save to the guards for my passport."

"Now, knave, thy life hangs on a thread so brittle that a breath shall break it. This same goldsmith I do suspect; but thou shalt see him, and whatsoever he showeth, I will be at hand that thou mayest tell me privily. I will then instruct thee what thou shalt do. If thou fail not in thy mission, truly thou shalt have great rewards from the emperor. But if thou whisper—ay to the walls—of our meeting, thou diest! Remember thou art watched. Think not to escape!"

The poor wretch caught hold on this last hope of deliverance, and promised to obey.

There was a narrow vault beneath the women's apartments in the palace, communicating by many intricate passages, with an outlet into the Forum. Here, on this eventful night, was an unusual assemblage. The vault was deep, even below the common foundations of the city, and where the light of day never came. An iron lamp hung from one of the massy arches of the roof; the damp and stagnant vapours lending an awful indistinctness to the

objects they surrounded. Chill drops lay on the walls and on the slippery floor. The stone benches were green with mildew ; and it seemed as though the foot of man had rarely passed its threshold.

In this chamber, several individuals were now assembled in earnest discourse, their conversation whispered rather than spoken ; yet their intrepid and severe looks, and animated gestures, ever and anon betrayed some deep and resolute purpose more than usually portentous.

"An untoward event truly," said one of the speakers, Virius Lupus himself, the emperor's private secretary. "If the old magician could have been won, it had been well."

"He might have saved the encounter and hazard we must now undergo. But let him hold his fealty. We have stout hearts and resolute hands enow to bring the matter to a successful issue." Thus spoke Caracalla, the unnatural eldest born of his father.

"And yet," replied the secretary, "he hath a ready admittance to his person, and a great sway over thy father's councils."

"I heed him not, now that brave men work. It were time that our trusty servant, the commander at Isurium, had sent the message, with the token I left him on my departure. Ere this, we ought to have known the hour we may expect his troops to move on the capital. I had thought to have made all safe ; to have put it beyond the power of fate to frustrate our purpose ; but I was foiled like a beardless boy at his weapons." He gnashed his teeth as he spoke ; and this monster of cruelty breathed a horrible threat against the life even of a parent and a king.

"Here is the roll," said one, who from his inkhorn and reed-pen seemed to be the scribe ; and whose ambition had been lured by a promise that he should have the office of sextumvir in the imperial city.

"Here be the names and disposition of the troops; the avenues and gates to which they are appointed."

"We but wait a messenger from Isurium to make our plans complete," said Caracalla. "By the same courier I send back this cypher. Examine it, Fabricius. The troops of Lucius Claudius are to march directly on the Forum, and slay all who attempt resistance. Thou, Virius Lupus, wilt guide them through the secret passage into the palace."

The secretary bowed assent.

"Though the empress knows not our high purpose, it is by her connivance we are here, safe from the emperor's spies. Under her mantle we are hidden. Suspicion hath crossed her that I am about to head the troops; that my father, oppressed with age and infirmities, will retire to Rome; and that I, Caracalla, rule in Britain."

"Then she knows not the mishap of yesternight?"

"She knows of the attempt, but not the agent. I would the messenger were come. 'Tis an unforeseen delay. I pray the gods there be not treachery somewhere. The officers and guard at the Calcarian gate and the bridge are ours; they were instructed to obey the signet."

"We will vouch for their fidelity," said two or three of the conspirators.

"Should he not arrive before midnight, we must strike," said Fabricius.

"Ay, as before," said the more cautious secretary. "But we may now get a broken head for our pains."

"The time brooks not delay," said Caracalla. "Every moment now is big with danger to our enterprise."

"Be not again too hasty," replied the secretary, "there be none that will divulge our plans. Let every part be complete before we act. We cannot succeed, should there be a disjointed purpose."

Caracalla vehement, and unused to the curb, was about

to reply, when the door opened and a dumb slave slowly entered. He crossed his hands, and pointed to the door.

"A messenger," said they all.

"The gods are at last propitious," said Caracalla. "Let him approach."

Soon one was led in by the sentinel, blindfolded, and the latter immediately withdrew.

"The sign," cried the secretary.

The stranger, without hesitation, presented a ring.

"'Tis the same," said Caracalla. He touched a concealed spring in the signet, and from underneath the gem drew forth a little paper with a scrap of writing in cypher. It was held before the lamp, and the intelligence it contained rendered their plot complete. Ere break of day the deed would be accomplished. The morning would see Caracalla proclaimed, and Severus deposed.

"Have ye any token to my master?" inquired the messenger.

"Take back this writing," said Virius Lupus. "Thou wilt find him not far from the city. We wait his coming."

"This leaden-heeled Mercury should have a largess," said the chief, "but in this den we have not wherewithal to give him. Hold! here is a good recompence, methinks," continued he, taking the crystal goblet from a recess. "Take this to thy mistress, and tell her to buy it from thee. We will see her anon. That charmed cup hath foiled me once, but I will foil thee now, and the powers thou servest. Thou shall not again cross my path!"

Cedric took the gift, wrapping it beneath his cloak.

"Thou mayest depart."

The dumb sentinel again took charge of him, and led him away by many intricate passages towards the entrance, where it seems the goldsmith had directed him on presenting the signet of Caracalla. The person who took charge

of him was a dumb eunuch, a slave in the service of the empress.

But the terrors of death were upon the wretched victim. He knew the centurion would assuredly be at hand to receive his report, and he could not escape. He had not brought back one word of intelligence; and, being blind-folded, he knew not whither he had been taken. The writing he carried would assuredly be unintelligible, save to those for whom it was intended. His mission, he could perceive, had utterly failed. The centurion would not be able to profit by any thing he had brought back, and must, inevitably, according to his pledge, at once render him up to the soothsayer. Whilst ruminating on his hard fate, a sudden thought crossed him. There was little probability of success; but, at all events, it might operate as a diversion in his favour, and the design was immediately executed. Skulking for a moment behind the slave, he tore off the bandage, and tripped up the heels of his conductor. Before the latter could recover himself, the Briton's gripe was on his throat.

"Now, slave, thou art my prisoner! Lead on, or, by this good sword, thou diest!"

The torch he carried was, luckily, not extinguished in the fall. The eunuch, almost choking, made a sign that he would obey. With the drawn blade at his throat, the slave went on; but Cedric, ever wary, and with that almost instinctive sagacity peculiar to man in his half-civilised state, kept a tiger-like watch on every movement of his prisoner, which enabled him to detect the fingers of the slave suddenly raised to his lips, and a shrill whistle would have consigned him over to certain and immediate destruction; but he struck down the uplifted hand with a blow which made his treacherous conductor crouch and cringe almost to the ground.

"Another attempt," said Cedric, "and we perish together!"

The wily slave looked all penitence and submission. Silently proceeding, apparently through the underground avenues of the palace, Cedric was momentarily expecting his arrival at the place where the centurion kept watch. A flight of steps now brought them to a spacious landing-place. Suddenly a lamp was visible, and beneath it sat a number of soldiers, the emperor's body-guard. They gave way as the eunuch passed by, followed by Cedric, his sword still drawn. Several of these groups were successively cleared: the guide, by a countersign, was enabled to thread his way through every obstacle that presented itself. The Briton's heart misgave him as they approached a vestibule, before which a phalanx of the guards kept watch. Here he thought it prudent to sheath his weapon, though he still followed the eunuch, as his only remaining chance of escape. Even here they were instantly admitted, and without any apparent hesitation. The door turned slowly on its pivot, and Cedric found himself in a richly decorated chamber, where, by the light of a single lamp, and with the smell of perfumed vapour in his nostrils, he saw a figure in costly vestments reclining on a couch. The slave prostrated himself.

"What brings thee from thy mistress at this untimely hour? A message from the empress?"

Here the speaker raised himself from the couch, and the slave, with great vehemence, made certain signs, which the wondering Briton understood not.

"Ah!" said the emperor, his eyes directly levelled at the supposed culprit; "thou hast found the thief who, in the confusion of yesternight, bore away the magic cup. Bring him hither, that I may question him ere his carcase be sent to the beasts."

The doomed wretch was now fairly in the paws of the very tyrant he had so long dreaded. The death, which by every stratagem he had striven to avoid, was now inevi-

table. He was betrayed by means of the very device he had, as he thought, so craftily adopted; but still his natural sagacity did not forsake him, even in this unexpected emergency. As he prostrated himself, presenting the cup he had stowed away safely in his cloak, he still kept a wary eye on the slave who had betrayed him. He saw him preparing to depart; and, knowing that his only hope of deliverance lay in preventing his guide from giving warning to the conspirators they had just left, Cedric, with a sudden spring, leaped upon him like a tiger, even in presence of the monarch.'

The latter, astounded at this unexpected act of temerity, was for a few moments inactive. This pause was too precious to be lost. Desperation gave him courage, and Cedric addressed the dread ruler of the world even whilst he clutched the gasping traitor.

"Here, great monarch, here is the traitor; and if I prove him not false, on my head be the recompense!"

He said this in a tone of such earnestness and anxiety that the emperor was suddenly diverted from his purpose of summoning his attendants. He saw the favourite slave of the empress writhing in the gripe of the barbarian; but the events of the last few hours had awakened suspicions which the lightest accusations might confirm. He remembered his son's guilt, the facility of his escape; and it might be that treason stood on the very threshold, ready to strike. He determined to sift the matter; and, the guard now summoned, the parties were separated,—each awaiting the fiat of the monarch.

"Where is Virius Lupus?" was the emperor's first inquiry.

"He hath not returned from the apartments of the empress."

"Let this slave be bound," cried Cedric. "Force him to conduct you even to the place whence, blindfold, he hath just

led me ; and if you find not a nest of traitors, my own head shall be the forfeit."

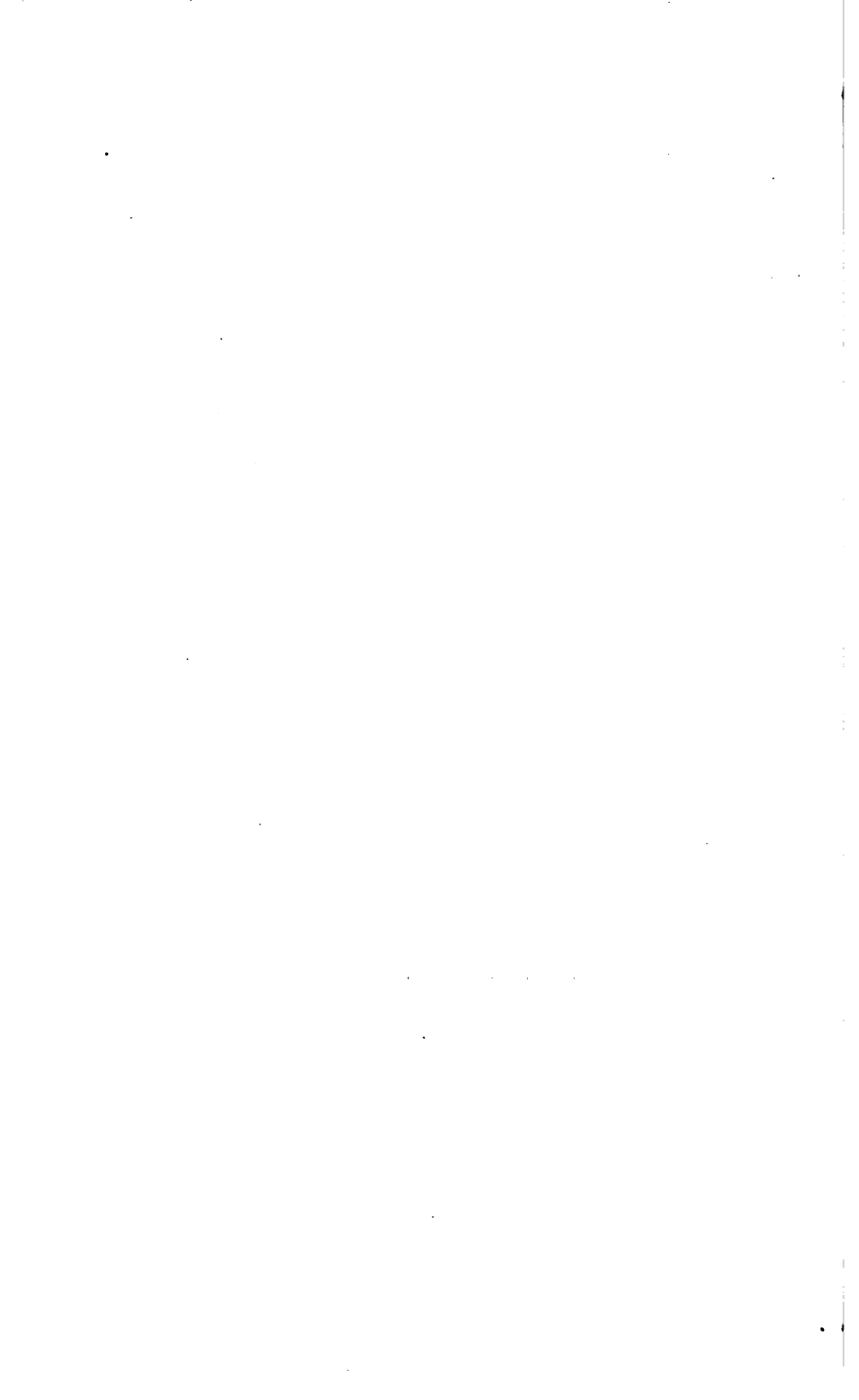
Dark and fearful was the flash that shot from the emperor's eye on the devoted eunuch. Pale and trembling he fell on his knees, supplicating, with uplifted hands, for mercy. He knew it was vain to dissemble.

"And what wert thou doing in such perilous company?" inquired the emperor, turning to Cedric, and in a voice which made him shrink.

"Let the centurion, Diogenes Verecundus, be sought out. He waits my return by the Forum Gate. To him the city owes a discovery of this plot, and Rome her monarch!"

The faithful centurion was soon found. The eunuch conducted them secretly to the vault. The conspirators were seized in the very height of their anticipated success. The roll containing the names of the leaders, the plan of attack, and the disposition of the rebellious troops, was discovered; and the morning sun darted a fearful ray on the ghastly and bleeding heads uplifted on the walls and battlements of the imperial palace.

But with misplaced clemency the monster Caracalla was again pardoned. The centurion Diogenes Verecundus was raised to the dignity of Sexumvir. The only reward claimed by the generous and sturdy Briton was an act of immunity for his master, who was merely dismissed from his post and banished the kingdom.



APPENDIX.

ONE morning, during Mr. Roby's stay at Keswick, in September 1849, it was reported that the floating island in the lake was making its appearance. He immediately took a boat, and we hastened with a friend to the spot. The island was plainly to be seen at a short distance below the surface of the water, nearly approaching it in some parts, in others gradually retreating beyond our sight. It was easily touched with a stick, and appeared covered with vegetation. We grappled up with the boat-hook, and brought away, as a memento of our visit, a specimen of the *Isoetes Lacustris* (European quill-wort), a plant which grows abundantly at the bottom of the lakes in this district. The boatmen rowed carefully about, afraid of passing over the island, lest the boat should run aground. It gave a strange feeling thus to find land coming up where, a few days before, we had floated in deep water. It did not rise any higher, but, after continuing for a day or two in the state just described, sank gradually to its old position at the bottom of the lake. The last time it was visible, some years since, it rose above the surface.

It lies at some distance from the shore on the Barrow side of the lake, between the Barrow landing and Lodore. It was near the former spot that we gathered the *Circæa Alpina* (Alpine Enchanter's Nightshade) in fruit, growing side by side with the *Silene Maritima* (Sea Campion). The botanical reader will, perhaps, feel an interest in the notice of two or three other localities of the rarer plants. In the same direction, high up among the rocks, near Ashness Gill, Mr. Roby found the *Oxyria reniformis* (Kidney-shaped Mountain-sorrel.) The *Salix Herbacæa* (Least Willow), the smallest of British trees, and *Lycopodium Alpinum* (Savin-

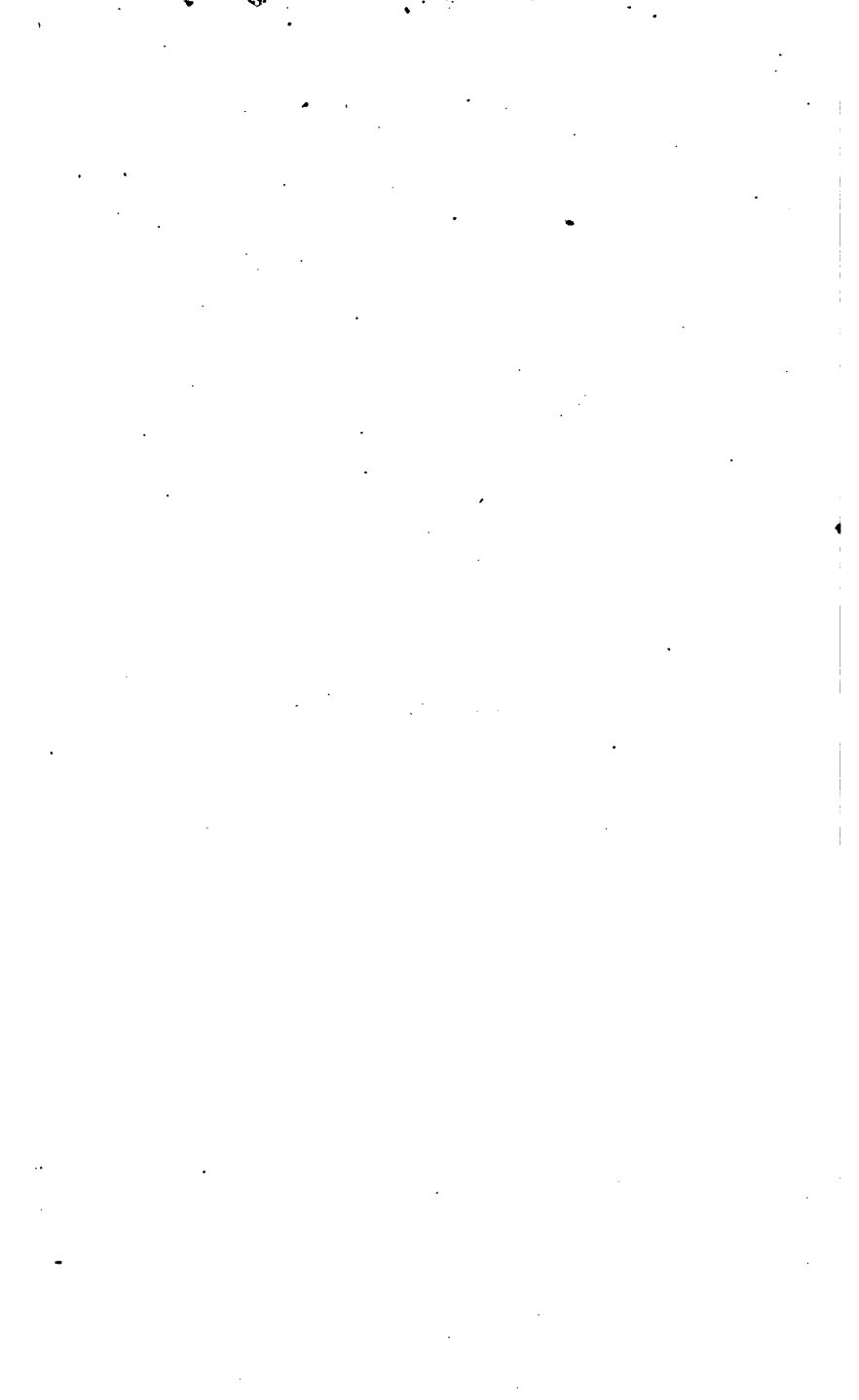
leaved Club-moss), on Skiddaw, their well known habitat; the latter plant also, with the *Alchemilla Alpina* (Alpine Lady's-mantle), its silvery leaves glistening in the sun, on the mountain-side opposite Honister Crag. In the wild and shady nooks of Borrowdale, the *Polypodium Phegopteris* (Pale Mountain-polypody) and the *P. Dryopteris* (Tender Three-branched Polypody), growing in charming profusion. And on Dunmail Raise, and on the precipitous descent of the Stake between Langdale Pikes and Bowfell, the golden stars of the *Saxifraga Azoides* (Yellow Mountain-saxifrage) were still sparkling, where a little moisture allowed them to flourish.

THE END.

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